The Two Knights of the Swan

Lohengrin and Helyas

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HELYAS, THE SWAN-KNIGHT, ARRIVING AT NIMAIE

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The Two Knights of the Swan

Lohengrin and Helyas

A Study of the Legend of the Swan-Knight, with special reference to its two most important developments

By
Robert Jaffray

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PREFACE

IT is hardly necessary to say that in the preparation of this book the references to the contents of the manuscripts do not represent original research on the part of the present writer. The work of that nature, which unfortunately is as yet limited and incomplete, has been done by scholars qualified for the difficult task; and the results of their work have been freely used in the pages which follow.

The various versions of the Swan-Knight story which may be found in books treating of legendary lore are interesting as a means of entertainment, but they are of little or no critical value. The information which is of real value in studying this subject is not found in the current literature of the time, but must be sought in books and periodicals which are not of easy reference for the ordinary reader.

Moreover, as a general rule, these writings have treated only one division or phase of the subject, with the natural result of furnishing information which is highly specialised in character and of

undoubtedly great value, but not always interesting to the general public. A careful search has revealed to the present writer only two authors who have treated the documentary evidences of the Swan-Knight legend in such a way as to interest the average reader, and neither of them wrote in English. One of these, Reiffenberg, wrote about sixty years ago; and, although his work is a monument of scholarly investigation, nevertheless it neglected proper consideration of very important evidence; so that his brother-scholar who finished the work after that author's death commented severely on this unfortunate omission. The other author, Pigeonneau, wrote about thirty years ago. His work, now out of print, is full of valuable information, and has been freely used in collecting many of the facts which are stated in the following pages. The book does not, however, cover the whole subject herein considered.

Again, national interest and national prejudice have undoubtedly influenced the attitude of some writers. The Swan-Knight legend has been a favourite subject for writers of both French and German origin or affiliation; and as their points of view have varied, it is not strange that we should find some lack of harmony in the opinions expressed and the conclusions reached.

In the present studies the author has found that the German version is familiar as regards its matter, and (if the conclusions reached in Chapter III. are valid) clearly defined as regards its origin; while the French version is little known and surrounded by obscurity. For this reason the greater amount of space has been required for the latter.

It has been the writer's aim to examine as much as possible of the literature treating of the subject, and to collect the principal items of information available to date which relate to the two most important developments of the Swan-Knight legend; to rearrange and classify this material and present it in a convenient and compact form, adding such new material as has been required to fulfil the special purpose of this book; and finally, to draw such conclusions as the facts appear to warrant. In carrying out this plan it has been impossible to avoid some dry details; but it is hoped that, in spite thereof, the great interest attaching to this ancient story may be recognised.

Cordial acknowledgments are made for valuable assistance rendered by the Management of the Yale University Library, as well as for many courtesies received at the Columbia University

Library, the British Museum, the Bibliothèque Royale at Brussels, and the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris.

R. J.

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THE TWO KNIGHTS OF THE SWAN

CHAPTER I

THE LEGEND OF THE SWAN-KNIGHT

THE melodious music and scenic attractions of *Lohengrin* have given to that opera a strong hold on the affections of the music-loving community; but it is probable that comparatively few of the hearers have any adequate appreciation of the basic story, its origin, or the extent of its dispersion.

The legend of the Swan-Knight appears in literature in many forms, having undergone various modifications in the course of its treatment by writers of different nationalities and at different periods. In a general sense it may be said to tell of the arrival of a mysterious knight in a boat drawn by a swan, at a time when a lady of high degree is in sore need of a protector; the

marriage of the lady and the knight; and the departure of the knight for an unknown country when his wife asks the forbidden questions about his name and origin.

It is not known when or in what shape the legend first appeared in definite form either as an oral tale or in writing. An Oriental origin has been suggested, and Scandinavia and Southern Germany have their advocates. The available evidence is scanty, but there is sufficient to create a strong presumption in favour of the region now covered by Belgium and the adjacent provinces of France and Germany, as being the place where the tale first appeared. Theories of this kind must, however, be accepted with reserve, especially in view of the fact that some writers see in this legend only a manifestation or development of a folk-tale common to many nations of the Aryan race. It has been suggested that the Swan-Knight is identical with Sceáf or Skeáf, the ancestor of the Anglo-Saxons, who, it is related, was brought in a boat, when a little child, to the shores of Great Britain; but as there is neither knight nor swan in this tale, the connection with our legend is not satisfactorily established. The average reader does not possess that highly-developed faculty of discovering analogies which is

given to some students of folk-lore, and which leads at times to theories more fanciful than logical or reasonable.

Whatever may have been the locality and time of the first appearance of the legend, the earliest references now known date from the 12th century, and are associated with the history of the family of Bouillon. In a history of the Crusades by Guillaume, Archbishop of Tyre, written in the latter part of the 12th century, the author, treating of the brilliant career of Godfrey of Bouillon, alludes to the tradition that this young warrior was descended from the Knight of the Swan, and states that he passes over this story without detailed reference, although the majority believe it to be true.[1] Guillaume died not later than 1197; and that part of his history which includes the reference to the Swan-Knight legend was apparently written not later than 1173, as is shown by internal evidence.[2] Since the legend is mentioned as a well-known tradition it must have been

[1] The passage is found in vol. ix., and reads as follows: "Præterimus denique studiose licet id verum fuisse plurimorum astruat narratio Cygni fabulam unde vulgo dicitur sementivam eis fuisse originem eo quod a vero videatur deficere talis assertio."

[2] *Cf.* Caxton's *Godeffroy of Bologne* reviewed by Mary Noyes Colvin in *Publications of Early English Text Society* for 1893.

current much earlier than the year 1173. When we consider the general interest which had prevailed throughout Europe for many years in regard to the events connected with the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre from the hands of the infidels, and remember the heroic qualities attributed to Godfrey, we can readily believe that there would be a disposition to look on the young knight as a character something more than human, so that a tale which attributed to him a supernatural origin would be easily believed, and would become widely spread.

The passage in Guillaume's history mentioned above has been often cited as the earliest-known mention of the legend of the Swan-Knight; but M. Gaston Paris, in an article contributed to *Romania*, vol. xxx. (1901), mentioned a letter written by Gui de Bazoches about 1170 in which he refers to Baldwin, the brother of Godfrey, as a grandson of the warrior who was led by a white swan by way of the Rhine.[1] This is clearly a

[1] The reference is in the following words:

"Hic erat ille nepos satulis [fatalis?] militis ejus,
Per vada cui Rheni dux fuit albus olor;
Huic celebris via Jherusalem duce cum Godefrido
Multo Partorum sanguine parta fuit."

The following note relative to this letter was prepared for the writer by Mr. Andrew Keogh, Reference Librarian, Yale University:

"Gui de Bazoches mentions the Swan-Knight in the 23d

reference to the legend of the Swan-Knight; and M. Gaston Paris believed it to be the oldest on record, being in his opinion without doubt earlier than the passage in Guillaume's history.

A Latin prose work, *Dolopathos*, written in the 12th century, mentions the legend, but its date of composition is not clearly established. It may be earlier than either Guillaume's history or the letter of Gui de Bazoches, but there is no distinct evidence on which we may rely. A French poem generally known as *Le Chevalier au Cygne*, or *La Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne*, which exists in a number of versions, relates a form of this legend; and the earliest version may date from a period anterior to any of the writings mentioned above, but definite knowledge on this point is lacking. Both of these works will be referred to more particularly as we progress with our present studies.

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of the collection of 36 letters preserved in the Luxembourg Library. The letters are all without date, but from circumstantial evidence it may be concluded that the 1st was written in 1162 and the 34th in 1190. The letters seem to follow each other in chronological order, so that the 23d is probably later than the 18th. Now, the 18th has an appendix of verses in honour of the recently martyred Thomas of Canterbury, and, as the martyrdom occurred on 29th December, 1170, this 18th letter cannot be earlier than 1171."

From the foregoing it seems probable that the letter mentioning the Swan-Knight was written between 1175 and 1180. The author died in the year 1203.

There is also to be noted an interesting passage in *La Chanson d'Antioche*, a poem of this same century, which refers to the legend and to its connection with the family of Bouillon. The poem, in the form in which it has been preserved, represents the work of two or more writers, any one of whom may be responsible for the introduction of the lines alluding to the Swan-Knight.

If this passage was added by the *latest* writer, as is most likely, it would probably be antedated by the references mentioned on the previous pages; but if it is part of the material which was contributed by an *earlier* hand, its date may yet be traceable to the early part of the 12th century.[1]

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[1] As this passage is not easily referred to, it is given below according to the edition of *La Chanson d'Antioche* edited by M. Paulin Paris in 1848:

"Mout est (Godefrois) de grant parage par Dieu qui fist le tron.
Bien avés oï dire qui el fu et qui non:
Son avie aduist uns cisnes a Nimaie el sablon,
En mi le plain gravier au plus maistre donjon,
Tout seul en un batel ainc n'i ot compaignon,
Bien chaucié et vestu d'un paile d'auqueton;
Plus reluisoit ses chiés que penne de paon;
Ainc Dieus ne fist un home de si bele façon.
Li cors fu mout pleniere, de la Surrexion:
L'emperel retint par itel guerredon
K'il li dona moillier en cele region,
Une soie parente, d'un sien cosin Begon;

It is therefore clearly established that the legend was well known in the 12th century, and generally associated at that time with Godfrey of Bouillon. How soon after Godfrey's death in the year 1100 this association was made, is not known; but in view of the exalted position which Godfrey occupied in the eyes of the world, and in view of the fact that his death occurred at the pinnacle of his greatness, we can readily understand how a story of his miraculous origin could spread abroad in connection with the news of his lamented death. We have seen that about the year 1175 the story was mentioned as a well-known tale, so we can in any case be sure of its existence a short time after Godfrey's death.

If we desire to probe deeper than the literature

Terre bone e fegonde dona il au baron,
E si le ravesti de l'onor de Buillon;
Pius li guia ses os, porta son gonfanon;
Volentiers l'en servi sans nule mesprison,
Tant que li cisnes vint a le sainte saison,
Le vassal en mena en un petit dromon,
Par mi la mer salee, sans sigle et sans noton;
Ains nel pot retenir li rois par nesun don;
Mout en furent dolent li gent de sa maison;
Onques puis n'en oirent autre devision."

Further comment on these lines will be found in Chapter V. In another work M. Paulin Paris refers to this passage as follows: "On voit au moins par cette citation l'ancienneté de la legende du Chevalier au Cygne, bien antérieur a Godefroid de Bouillon" (*Guillaume de Tyr et ses continuateurs*, *Histoire générale des Croisades*, 1879, footnote, p. 305.)

of the 12th century, mentioned above, and consider the possibility that the legend is a development of some folk-tale, we enter into an almost limitless field of conjecture. There is nothing unreasonable in this theory; indeed it is supported to some extent by the fact that the Swan often appears as a feature in the mythology of the nations of Northern Europe.

The instances given above are by no means the only early allusions to this legend in the literature of the period. The Chronicle of Lambert d'Ardres (who lived 1180–1225), the Chronicle of the Abbey of Brogne, written by one of the monks in or about the year 1211, the works of Vincent de Beauvais (who died 1264), and the Chronicle of Helinand (about 1200), known only through quotations by Vincent de Beauvais and otherr,—all these writings mention the legend of the Swan-Knight, and give evidence of the widely-spread interest in the story at that early date. Generally speaking, these early references were very brief, and served only to remind the readers of something which they already knew in a more amplified form, through the oral recitals of the *jongleurs* who went about the country rendering the same service as is now done by the printed book. During the 13th and 14th centuries the greater production of manu-

scripts and the more general desire to *read*, instead of to *listen*, went hand in hand; and the literature available for studies like the present began to appear.

In the centuries which followed, the ever-widening interest in the legend is shown by the traces of its appearance in the literature of other countries. One of the earliest evidences of this is a manuscript in the Royal Library at Madrid which has been edited under the title *La Gran Conquista de Ultramar*. It is a compilation of various writings about the crusades, and includes much of the same material as is found in the early French manuscripts to which we shall allude later on. It apparently dates from the end of the 13th or beginning of the 14th century. The legend appears also in English, German, Dutch, and Scandinavian literature, and even in that of Iceland.

In the development of the basic legend into stories by the different authors who have treated it, we find, as is natural, considerable variety of detail. There is also some variety in the personalities of the stories; but, aside from a few cases of minor importance, the hero appears either under the name Lohengrin, as in the German versions, or Helyas (Élias, Elyas, etc.) in those of French

origin. It is the purpose of these studies to consider the stories of Lohengrin and of Helyas, their origin, development, and respective ages.

CHAPTER II

THE STORY OF LOHENGRIN

THE most direct source of the story of Lohengrin as it is related in the opera, appears to have been a poem under that same title which was written by an unknown author (probably from Bavaria) in the latter part of the 13th century. This in turn was virtually an elaboration of a brief and compact narrative of the adventures of Lohengrin which had already appeared in the poem *Parzival* by Wolfram von Eschenbach. There was also a poem called *Der Schwan-Ritter* by Konrad von Wurtzburg, which appeared in the second half of the 13th century, and which tells a story much like that of Lohengrin but without mentioning this hero's name. These, together with the varying forms of the story which had grown out of them, and also a French tale of similar character, were available to Wagner when he wrote the opera, and were used by him to construct the book.

The brief story of Lohengrin in the poem

Parzival, mentioned above, may be summarised as follows:

A maiden, ruling over the land of Brabant, had persistently refused all offers of marriage, and was sorely criticised by her nobles and her people for following this course. She swore she would only marry him who should be sent by God. From Monsalväsch (the home of the Grail) came a knight guided by a swan. He landed at Antwerp, and was welcomed by the princess as the God-sent husband. The knight announced that in marrying her he would lose a kingdom, and he warned her never to ask either his name or the country whence he came, adding that, if she failed to heed this warning, God would recall him to the land he had left. She pledged her word, and they were married. Some time later her curiosity got the better of her. She asked the questions, and soon repented of her rashness, for the swan-boat came and took the knight away. He left as mementos his sword, his horn, and his ring. His name was Lohengrin, son of Parzival.

This passage will be referred to more particularly in the next chapter. It is sufficient to note here the impression of incompleteness conveyed by the brief sketch of which an abstract is given above—suggesting the probability that other traditions

or stories, more or less familiar, may have been the basis of this brief narrative.

The poem *Lohengrin* gives a very elaborated version of the narrative detailed above. The essential points for our present consideration are as follows·

Elsa of Brabant, after the death of her father and mother, was left under the care and guardianship of Telramund, who, moreover, became a suitor for her hand. As he was unsuccessful in prosecuting his suit, he appealed to the Emperor and it was arranged that the matter should be settled by combat between Telramund and a warrior chosen by Elsa. The maiden appealed to God for aid, and, upon the advice of her chaplain, she rang a little bell which was attached to her rosary. The sound of the bell was carried to the distant Temple of the Grail, and it was made known there to King Arthur and his knights that Elsa of Brabant was in distress and that a defender should be sent to her. By a supernatural sign Lohengrin was indicated, and he at once made preparations for his departure. Just as he was about to leave, a swan-boat arrived; he entered the boat, and sailed away. Being guided to Antwerp he found Elsa with her nobles and people considering the situation; and the arrival of the

swan-boat caused much excitement. Lohengrin was received with the honour due to one of princely rank, and the swan-boat disappeared. Lohengrin vanquished Telramund at Mayence and married Elsa, but the mystery about him remained undisclosed. After a considerable lapse of time, the Duchess of Clève, whose husband had been unhorsed by Lohengrin in a friendly contest, tried to prejudice the mind of Elsa against her mysterious husband. Elsa's curiosity became irresistible and she asked Lohengrin for the information hitherto withheld. Twice he turned her off. The third time he promised to answer, and arranged to meet the royal court and populace at Antwerp. There he revealed his name and origin, and sailed away in the swan-boat, which had mysteriously arrived for him. Lohengrin left as tokens, his ring, his horn, and his sword.

The poem is very much expanded, and covers many subjects not alluded to in the brief abstract above. The Old German text of this poem has been edited by Goerres[1] (*Lohengrin, ein alt-*

[1] In the introduction to Goerres' book the origin of the story of Lohengrin is apparently attributed to the poem *Erec et Enide* of Chrétien de Troyes, but this is evidently an error It is probably based on an allusion to the *Erec* of Hartmann von Aue in the closing lines of *Parzival*, which has no connection with the question of the derivation of the Lohengrin

deutsches gedicht, Heidelberg, 1813) and also more recently by Prof. H. Rückert. A rendering into modern German may be found in Reclam's *Universal Bibliothek* (Leipzig).

The story as portrayed in the opera is so familiar that a repetition here is unnecessary. It follows the same general lines as the poem of the same title. The consideration of the operatic version, and its relation to the earlier forms, may be found in the writings of those who have treated of Wagner and his works. This instance is not the only one where Wagner's skill as a dramatist was manifested simultaneously with his genius as a composer. He had a remarkable power of selecting from all the different versions of a story such elements as he needed to enable him to construct a finished and consistent work on the lines which he had in view; and this power was well shown in his version of the story of Lohengrin.

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story. See the notes to the translation of Wolfram's *Parzival* by Jessie L. Weston, vol. ii., p. 224.

CHAPTER III

THE ORIGIN OF THE LOHENGRIN STORY

THE earliest connection of the personality of Lohengrin with the Knight of the Swan is found in the poem *Parzival* by Wolfram von Eschenbach. This poet lived in the latter part of the 12th and early part of the 13th century. The dates of his birth and death are unknown, but the internal evidence afforded by the poem mentioned above shows clearly that it was written in the early years of the 13th century.[1] The poem is one of several similar writings which appeared at about that period, and which were inspired by the legends of the Knights of the Round Table and of the Holy Grail. Wolfram's story of *Parzival* does not concern us in the present discussion; we have only to consider a brief passage at the close of the poem, where, after it is stated that Lohengrin, the son of Parzival, was received into the

[1] Meyer, in *Konversations-Lexikon*, vol. xx., p. 730, states that Wolfram finished *Parzival* about 1210, and died about 1220. The *Nouvelle Biographie Générale*, vol. xvi., states that about 1225 he was listed among the poets who had ceased to exist.

service of the Grail, a few lines are added to the effect that Lohengrin was sent from Monsalväsch, guided by a swan, to Antwerp, where he married the Duchess of Brabant, but finally left her and returned to the home of the Grail because the Duchess had asked him the forbidden question about his name and his country.

Wolfram's statement in regard to *Parzival* is, that he obtained the material for his work from another poet, Kiot (also written Kyot and Guyot) the Provençal, who in turn found the story of the Grail in an Arabic manuscript at Toledo, written long previously, apparently before the crusades, by a heathen author named Flegetanis, who was the first to record the tale.

A superficial consideration of these statements might lead the reader to infer that they indicated a considerably earlier date for the identification of Lohengrin with the Knight of the Swan, and perhaps that it might date back to a remote antiquity; but on further examination the contrary conclusion is suggested.

If Wolfram's *Parzival* were a *translation* into German of an existing French poem, either of the foregoing theories would be reasonable; but no such claim is made. On the contrary the poem is manifestly the *re-telling* of a story which has pre-

viously been told by a writer in another language. Wolfram relates the story in his own fashion, injecting his own personality into the work in various ways. The introduction is apparently from his hand; in various parts of the poem he interrupts the continuity of the narrative to make observations and explanations; and he mentions various German characters contemporaneous with him. These proofs of the fact that his work contains material which was not in the original source are especially pertinent when we consider the brief reference to the Swan-Knight in the concluding lines of the poem. This passage is introduced after the story of Parzival had been brought to a natural conclusion; and the lines give every appearance of being an addition made by Wolfram to the existing material which he used as a basis for his poem. Immediately after this reference to Lohengrin, Wolfram adds another passage to express his disapproval of the way another writer (Chrétien de Troyes) has told the story of Parzival; and of course this latter passage is original with Wolfram. Granting, therefore, as must be done, that at the close of the poem *Parzival* there has been added some material which was not in the original source (as in like manner a similar addition is apparently found in

the introduction), the only question to be decided is, where this addition begins; *i. e.*, whether it includes only the passage criticising Chrétien, or whether it embraces also the passage relating to Lohengrin. The latter conclusion is suggested by the passage itself and by the manner of its introduction, as has been mentioned above; and this conclusion is strengthened by the fact that, interwoven in the brief narrative about Lohengrin, is a reference to a German poet, contemporaneous with Wolfram, who could not, with any degree of probability, have been known to the mysterious Provençal poet.

Unfortunately we cannot obtain light on this question by reference to the original source of *Parzival*, which, according to Wolfram, was a work by Kiot. No such work is in existence, nor is there in existence any material whatever known to have come from the hand of Kiot. It has even been held by some writers that this poet never lived, and that Wolfram's reference to him is based only on fancy, and with the object of adding a mysterious interest to his own work. Other writers are content to hold their judgment in suspense for the time.[1]

[1] Thus, in *L'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, vol. xxx., Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1888, we read:

"On n'est pas encore d'accord sur le point de savoir si ce

It has been stated on a previous page that Wolfram's poem was only one of a number of similar works which appeared at about that period. The adventures of "Perceval" were a favourite theme. There is good reason for believing that the Perceval legend in its original form was of great age; and that at about the period under consideration the original folk-lore story was combined with the Arthurian legends, then much in vogue. One of these works calls for our consideration. It is known under two titles, viz., *Perceval le Gallois* and *Li Conte del Graal*.[1] The author was Chrétien (or Chrestien) de Troyes, one of the most famous of the French writers of that age. He died at the close of the 12th century, say about 1191. This

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Kyot n'est pas un etre purement imaginaire" (p. 28), and also:

"Les Allemands ne se sont pas contentés de traduire plus ou moins librement les poèmes français du cycle breton; ils ont de bonne heure essayé de composer des romans arthuriens de leur cru, en les donnant d'ailleurs généralement comme pris d'une source française, afin de les faire profiter du succès acquis aux traductions du français. On n'est pas encore arrivé a se mettre d'accord sur le point de savoir si Wolfram d'Eschenbach a déja employé ce procédé dans les partis de Parzival qu'il n'a pas trouvées dans Chrétien, et qu'il prétend devoir a un certain Kyot le Provençal. . . ." (pp. 118, 119).

[1] This title, although often used, has been considered as unwarranted, and probably given by another writer who added a preface to the poem. *Cf. The Legend of the Holy Grail* (p. 17) by William Wells Newell, Cambridge, 1902.

poem was not finished by Chrétien, the work having been interrupted by the author's death. It was, however, completed by at least three other writers (known as "continuators") at later periods. The portion which is of Chrétien's own authorship bears a very close correspondence with Wolfram's *Parzival*, indicating clearly a relation of some kind—either a borrowing of the later author from the earlier one, or else a dependence of the two works upon a common source. It is interesting to note that Chrétien's own part of the work does not carry the story far enough to contain any reference to Lohengrin; and that all of Wolfram's references to this character are in those parts of his poem which differ not only from the work of Chrétien but also from that of his continuators.

Turning now to the work of the so-called continuators of Chrétien, the first of those writers is known by a variety of names—Gautier de Denet, Gaucier de Donaing, Gaucher de Dourdain, Wauchier de Denain, etc. In his addition to the original writer's work there is a reference to the arrival at King Arthur's court of a boat drawn by a swan, and containing the body of a dead knight. Garahies (or Gurrehes), one of the knights, is afterwards brought to the court by the same conveyance. This, evidently, is merely an

echo of the original swan legend in its primitive form, and it calls for no further comment here.

Another continuator, Gerbert (or Gibert), relates in his part of the tale that a supernatural voice announced to Perceval that from his line would be descended the conqueror of Jerusalem. This passage, although apparently irrelevant to our subject, is nevertheless of importance because the details of the prophecy correspond closely with a form of the Swan-Knight story wherein Godfrey of Bouillon, the conqueror of Jerusalem, is described as the grandson of the Knight of the Swan, and in which the Knight himself bears another name than Lohengrin. Whether Gerbert found this story in another work about Perceval which he used in writing his continuation of Chrétien's poem, or whether he adapted it from another tale current at that time, will be considered in a later chapter. The points of special interest are, that there is no mention of Lohengrin by name, and that the form of the story alluded to is one which has never been connected with him.

The identity of this writer is not absolutely determined, but he is generally believed to be Gerbert de Montreuil, the author of the *Roman de la Violette*. His period of literary activity would

therefore be not far from 1225, so that his work under present consideration would belong to a later date than Wolfram's *Parzival*.[1]

Inasmuch, then, as in this poem of Chrétien and his continuators, so closely related to Wolfram's *Parzival*, there is no mention of Lohengrin, either in the part written by the original author or in those parts added by his continuators, the impression is strengthened that the connection of Lohengrin with the Swan-Knight story is original with Wolfram, and that the passage in which it occurs was added as a sort of postscript to the existing tale which he had elaborated. It may also be noted that the Lohengrin passage is foreign to the story of Parzival, and that its exceeding brevity and forced connection with the rest of the poem suggest of themselves a doubt whether it was comprised in the original narrative.

[1] Gerbert's *Roman de la Violette* was, according to Gröber, his first work (*cf. Grundriss der romanishen Philologie*, vol. ii., pt. 1, p. 532) and was written after 1221. Michel and Krause say it was after 1225 (*cf. Roman de la Violette*, p. iii.; *Über Gerbert de Montreuil*, p. 5). Maurice Wilmotte says it could not have been earlier than 1225 (*cf. Bulletin de l'Académie Royale de Belgique*, 1900). It seems reasonably certain, therefore, that the continuation of *Perceval* was written later than 1225 Whatever the exact date may have been, it was evidently later than Wolfram's *Parzival*. Fauriel, in his *Histoire de la Poésie Provençal*, chap. xx., states that when Wolfram's poem was composed at the beginning of the 13th century, Chrétien's *Perceval* already existed, although *not yet finished.*

Of course absolute proof is unobtainable without reference to the original work which formed the basis of Wolfram's poem, and this, as has been stated on a previous page, is not in existence.

It will easily be seen that Wolfram's relation to Chrétien, and the extent to which they both made use of existing works, are matters of importance in our present discussion; and this involves a consideration of the broad question of how much credence can be placed in the statements of mediæval writers in regard to the sources from which they drew. Many people are disposed to be very skeptical about such statements.[1] It will not do, however, to dismiss them all as improbable; nor, on the other hand, can we accept them blindly. They must all stand the test of internal and external evidence, and, if the evidence be inconclusive, we must have due regard to the question of probability. Fauriel, in alluding to the romances of the Round Table, refers to the manner in which the authors strained the credulity of their readers by statements regarding the authority of their writings. He instances a prose romance wherein the author states that the book containing

[1] "Statements of mediæval writers regarding their sources are seldom to be implicitly accepted" (*King Arthur and the Table Round*, by William Wells Newell, p. xxix.).

the history of the Grail was brought to him from heaven by Jesus Christ in person! [1]

In the case of Kiot, whom Wolfram gives as his source, our natural impression of skepticism about a poet whose works do not exist, and who is not mentioned by any other writer of his time, must not stand in the way of the broader judgment of those authorities who, while acknowledging the lack of real proof, nevertheless are able to see indications that this poet was not a myth. Thus that eminent writer Fauriel, although referring to Kiot as "nom inconnu parmi ceux des troubadours," nevertheless states his belief that such a Provençal poet existed and that his work was used by Wolfram.[2] There have been noted certain indications of French influence in Wolfram's *Parzival* which seem to indicate a French source.

However, even if the existence of this poet be conceded, it does not necessarily follow that he obtained the entire story as related in *Parzival* from an Arabic manuscript found at Toledo. If this idea were literally true, and if the mysterious document contained not only the story of the Grail but also a reference to the Swan-Knight, a fascinat-

[1] Fauriel's *Histoire de la Poésie Provençale*, vol. ii., chap. xxvii.

[2] Fauriel's *Histoire de la Poésie Provençale*, vol. iii., chap. xl., p. 290.

ing field of research would be opened; and perhaps the Oriental origin of the Swan-Knight story, claimed by some, would in time be proved. The text of Wolfram's poem appears, however, to indicate that the subject of our present studies was not mentioned in the Arabic manuscript. In the part of the poem (Book IX.) which gives the detailed story of the discovery at Toledo it is stated that Kiot found a manuscript relating the tale of the Grail by Flegetanis, and that thereafter he sought for the story in the Latin chronicles of various nations, and finally found in the chronicles of Anjou the detailed narrative of Parzival and his ancestors which Wolfram repeats. Thus there seems to be a clear implication of a double source, so that at least we may conclude that the Toledo manuscript said nothing of the Swan-Knight. It is true that in the previous book of Wolfram's poem (Book VIII.) there is a phrase which appears to indicate that Kiot found the story of Parzival in the heathen book, but this passage is merely a parenthetical reference, made briefly and in a very general and cursory way; and it is manifestly of little importance in comparison with the detailed and contradictory statement which follows it.[1]

[1] In *Legends of the Wagner Drama*, by Jessie L. Weston,

There remains the possibility that there may have been a reference to the Swan-Knight in some Angevin chronicle which was known to Kiot but is not now in existence. This, however, is entirely conjectural, and the theory is opposed by the indications that Wolfram' reference at the close of his poem is of his own creation.

As to Chrétien, we know that he wrote under the patronage of Count Philip of Flanders, and we have his own statement that the Count commanded him to put into verse the best story known to the Court—the story of the Grail; and further, that the Count gave him the book in which the story was contained.[1] This book is one

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reference is made to the statement that the legend of the Grail originated in the Arabic manuscript, and the author adds: "The truth of this statement may be gauged by the fact that the same MS. is stated to have contained the story of Parzival, the Aryan-Celtic origin of which is beyond doubt" (p. 181).

[1] The passage is given thus in Potvin's edition of *Perceval le Gallois*, vol. ii., p. 17:

"Or contera Crestiiens ci
L'essample que avés oï;
Dont ara bien sauve sa paine
Crestiiens qui entent et paine,
Par le comandement le Conte
À rimoier le meillor conte
Qui soit contés en court roial;
Çou est li contes del Gréal,

of the lost treasures of literature. If the manuscript is ever discovered it will be hailed with delight by all students of the Grail legends.

Concerning the two lost books which have just been referred to, a plausible theory has been suggested, viz.: that Wolfram's source, Kiot's book, was in turn based upon Count Philip's book, the direct source of Chrétien's poem, so that Chrétien's authority was at first hand while Wolfram's was at second hand.[1] This would explain Wolfram's reference to Chrétien, mentioned on a previous page.

Returning now to the Lohengrin passage in *Parzival* it will be seen that there are no clear

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Dont li Quens li balla le livre;
S'orés coment il se délivre."

Potvin also gives (p. 308) the following version from another manuscript:

"Donc aura bien sauve la painne
Crestiens qui entent et painne,
A rimoier l'eure et lor conte,
Par le commandement du Conte,
Qui soit conté en cort roial;
Ce est li contes du Graal
Donc li Quens li bailla le livre;
Oiez comment il s'en délivre."

It is proper to add that William Wells Newell, in his book *King Arthur and the Table Round*, p. xxiii., refers to this story of the Count's book, and claims that implicit reliance cannot be put in it—holding that the introduction in which it occurs is not of unquestioned authenticity. The story is, however, accepted by other writers of the highest standing.

[1] See the notes on the translation of *Parzival* by Jessie L. Weston, vol. ii., pp. 193, 194.

and specific indications in that poem that the passage came from, or was suggested by, the work of Kiot; and that in fact the opposite conclusion is suggested. Moreover, when we examine Chrétien's poem, written somewhat earlier, on the same subject, bearing a close resemblance to Wolfram's, and based to some extent on the same material, we find not only no trace of Lohengrin, but in fact no reference to the elaborated story of the Swan-Knight—with the exception of a passage written by one of the continuators who lived later than Wolfram, and which refers to a form of the legend never associated with Lohengrin.

It would therefore seem to follow that there is no proof, and in fact no indication, that the identification of Lohengrin with the Knight of the Swan has any earlier origin than in Wolfram's poem.

Starting then from this conclusion, we are impelled to seek the reason for the addition of a passage which was so foreign to the subject-matter of the original poem; and we find an explanation which is reasonable and probable. The legend of the Swan-Knight was widely known, and Wolfram may have seen that the interest in the life of Parzival would be much stimulated by identifying his son Lohengrin with the hero of that legend. Moreover, although the attempt to

do this in a way which would suggest the possibility that the addition was a part of the original story would not be considered as consistent with the ethics of the present day, nevertheless this procedure would be entirely in accord with the literary usages of the times in which Wolfram lived. The standards of literary honesty and accuracy in the 13th century did not correspond with those of the present day.

The theory that Wolfram made use of this means to add to the interest of his work is strengthened if we conclude, as may be shown later on, that the original legend of the Swan-Knight had already been fashioned into an elaborated story with a hero of definite personality; and it is not at all improbable that this story may have come to the knowledge of Wolfram and suggested to his mind that an adaptation of it would add desirable features to his own poem. This also would have been a not unusual procedure. The writers of that period did not hesitate to borrow or rewrite the material of other authors; and in fact their practice in this respect has been referred to as a sort of literary *décalcomanie.* The idea is highly suggestive, even if the criticism is not entirely deserved.[1]

[1] In *L'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, vol. xxv., p. 509, reference is made to this general subject, as follows: "Dans

It is, furthermore, interesting to note that in the closing lines of the poem, where Wolfram repeats his indebtedness to Kiot for the story, he apparently indicates that the winning of the Grail is the end of Kiot's tale, so that this would imply that the Lohengrin addition was not in the original. The passage is not clear, so the argument is not conclusive, but the language employed is suggestive of this idea.

One reason which points toward the borrowing of a current idea rather than towards the contribution of original matter, is found in the brevity of the narrative, which is particularly noticeable when we remember the prolixity of mediæval writers. The story of *Parzival* is spun out to the tedious length of about 25,000 lines; and yet the subsidiary story of Lohengrin is contained in about 100 lines. It does not seem possible that an *original* tale, including elements of great interest, and affording opportunity for noteworthy dramatic situations, could be treated with surpassing brevity by any writer of that age. Moreover, the sudden transfer of the scene of action to the Netherlands seems to suggest the presence of some influence which is not apparent on the face of the narrative.

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ces temps-là, on s'inquietait fort peu de ce que nous appelons la propriété littéraire."

On the other hand, if it is true that the elaboration of the Swan legend, with characters and places drawn from other countries, was already known, and recited here and there as one of the current *chansons* of the time, Wolfram might very naturally have seen the advantage of linking the Parzival story with this legend of the Swan-Knight, modifying the latter to such an extent as suited his purpose. It would have been entirely consistent with contemporary practices if he had done so; and in such a case a brief narrative would have been all that the occasion required.

Note.—In *Romania*, vol. xxvii., M. Gaston Paris reviewed an article by Prof. Blöte in *Zeitschrift für Deutsches Altertum*, vol. xlii., in which the opinion was expressed that Wolfram's account of the Swan-Knight legend was original with him. M. Paris states that he is in full accord with this opinion. This corroboration of the conclusions reached in the foregoing chapter did not come to the present writer's notice until after the chapter had been finished.

CHAPTER IV

THE STORY OF HELYAS—EARLY POETIC VERSIONS

THE study of the story of Helyas takes us back to the period of the First Crusade. The stirring events of that time served as an inspiration for various poems, more or less historical in character, which celebrated the occurrences of the Crusade and the men who distinguished themselves in it. Some of these *chansons de geste* were evidently written by men who directly participated in the events or were witnesses of them.

There are now in existence a few manuscripts containing a collection of poems, varying in authorship and in age, which, by reason of their union in the manuscripts and the affinity of their subjects, are known collectively under the title *Le Roman du Chevalier au Cygne* (The Romance of the Knight of the Swan). The separate poems which are comprised in this romance were not composed in the chronological order of the narrative, nor do they all exist in the exact form in which they were composed. Moreover, the manu-

scripts vary in their texts. It follows, therefore, that the internal evidence obtainable from the manuscripts themselves must be the main source from which their value and their age must be ascertained. It is unfortunate that the critical study of these manuscripts should thus far have been made only in a partial degree, so the available material is much less extensive than one could wish, and the examination of the subject is attended with much difficulty.

There are at the present time in the libraries of Paris six manuscripts containing part or all of the work in its poetical form, *viz.*, five in the Bibliothèque Nationale and one in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal. The manuscripts in the first-named library are numbered as follows:

1621	formerly	7628	
786	"	7190	
795	"	7192	
12558	"	540^{8}	(supplément français)
12569	"	105	" "

All these manuscripts are believed to be of about the 13th century; the first and the fourth undoubtedly contain the most ancient forms of the story.

The manuscript in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal is of special interest because it bears a definite date,

viz., 1268, and thus shows that all the divisions of the poem were united into one work *not later than* the year mentioned. How much earlier this may have been accomplished cannot at present be proved, but the various divisions were all in existence considerably earlier than 1268, so there is every reason for believing that they had been assembled at some earlier period, and that this manuscript merely happens to be the earliest copy now known which bears a definite date.

This great work consists of five parts, which, in the order of the events related, are as follows: (1) *La Naissance et les Aventures du Chevalier au Cygne*, also called the Lay of Helyas, (2) *Les Enfances de Godeffroi de Bouillon*, (3) *La Chanson d'Antioche*, (4) *La Chanson des Chétifs*, and (5) *La Chanson de Jérusalem*. Another division, intended to carry the historical narrative to a later date, is announced in the manuscripts; but only two of them contain it, and these two are considered to be of later date than the others.

La Chanson d'Antioche is the oldest division, and it is also, historically, the most important. The author was probably Richard le Pèlerin, who made free use of Latin chronicles written partly by participants in the First Crusade and partly by an author who derived his knowledge from eye-

witnesses. Its date can be fixed as in the second quarter of the 12th century. In its existing form it is a revision of the original work made by Graindor de Douai in the latter part of that century. It tells of the Council of Clermont (1095), the work of Peter the Hermit, and the events of the First Crusade up to the fall of Antioch (1098), with special reference to the deeds of Godfrey of Bouillon.

La Chanson des Chétifs was inserted to relate the adventures of certain important Crusaders attached to Peter the Hermit, who were made captives, and had many wonderful and even miraculous experiences. Graindor de Douai is thought to have been the original author.

La Chanson de Jérusalem resumes the historical narrative, and tells of the capture of Jerusalem (1099). In its original form it dates from about 1147, but this, like *La Chanson d'Antioche*, was rewritten by Graindor de Douai, and only exists now in this revision. This chanson is probably not by the same author as the one who wrote *La Chanson d'Antioche*.

The foregoing three divisions are not connected with our present subject, and therefore do not call for further consideration here. Our attention is confined to the other two divisions which tell

of the birth and adventures of the Swan-Knight, and the early life of Godfrey of Bouillon.

The story in manuscript number 12558 is considered to be in an earlier form than that of any other manuscript. It is the shortest; it has less of the fabulous element; and it is less burdened with minor details. The tendency of the time was towards the expansion and elaboration of material, and the addition of fabulous features; so the other manuscripts of this story, which give evidence of the foregoing tendency, can with reasonable certainty be assigned to a later date. The manuscript states that the story was found in the Monastery of St. Fagon at Roncevaux, but, remembering the ways of mediæval writers, we must not place too much reliance on this statement.

The narrative has been condensed by M. Paulin Paris,[1] and M. H. Pigeonneau.[2] A brief abstract, based on the work of these two writers, is here given.

King Lothaire reigned over a country adjacent to Hungary. One day, while hunting, he met a beautiful maiden, Elioxe by name, and, falling in love, he persuaded her to become his wife.

[1] *Histoire Littéraire de la France*, vol. xxii.
[2] *Le Cycle de la Croisade.*

Having the gift of prophecy, she announced that from their union would be born one who would be proclaimed king in the Orient. She further stated that they would have seven children at one birth, six boys and one girl, all of whom would be born with golden chains around their necks. While Lothaire was absent engaged in war, Elioxe died after giving birth to the seven children. The King's mother, who had opposed the marriage, managed to send the little ones away to the forest and tried to arrange so that they should be abandoned there. Her messenger, however, could not bring himself to do this, so he left the children at the entrance of a hermit's habitation. The hermit cared for the children for several years. In course of time their existence was made known to the Queen-mother by Rudemart, an attendant of the King. Believing that the curious talisman around the neck of each child was closely related to the child's existence in some way, she sent Rudemart to obtain the chains. He succeeded in obtaining those belonging to the six boys, who were consequently changed at once into swans. The little girl managed to escape with her golden chain, and she was thus able to retain her human form. She went after a while to the city where Lothaire lived, and there found the six swans.

The recognition was mutual, and the attitude of the swans and the little girl toward one another attracted the attention of the King. Having heard her story, the King sought to restore the chains but could only obtain five, because one had been melted. Five of the boys were accordingly restored to human form, while the sixth, lacking his chain, remained a swan.

The five boys grew up, and became knights. The history henceforth is confined to one of these knights, who, leaving the city in a boat drawn by his brother, the swan, went to Nimègue where the Emperor resided.

The Duchess of Bouillon and her daughter Beatrix were at that moment imploring the protection of the Emperor against Rénier, Duke of Saxony, who claimed their heritage. The Swan-Knight undertook to defend the Duchess' cause; an assembly was held in the great hall of the palace, the combat was arranged, and Rénier was defeated and slain.

The Swan-Knight married Beatrix, but made her promise never to ask his name or his country, explaining that if she broke her promise he would have to leave her. A daughter was born to them, Ida by name; and when this child was seven years old, the mother asked of her husband the

forbidden questions. The Swan-Knight sadly prepared to follow the course he had predicted would be inevitable. He went to Nimègue, found the swan-boat waiting for him, and departed for ever. He left his wife an ivory horn which would exercise a mysterious protection over her. One day the castle caught fire, and the horn was forgotten; but a swan suddenly appeared, plunged into the flames, seized the horn, and flew away.

Ida married Eustache, Count of Boulogne. Beatrix had, at the time of her marriage, received a revelation from heaven that her daughter would be the mother of a king, a duke, and a count. This prophecy was fulfilled in the three sons of Ida, Godefroi, King of Jerusalem, Baudouin, Duke of Rohais and Edesse, and Eustache, Count of Boulogne. Godefroi, at the age of fifteen years, became a knight, and went to the Emperor's court at Nimègue.

The narrative is now abruptly transferred to Mecca, where Calabre, a Saracen, using her prophetical gift, foretold that Jerusalem would be captured by the three sons of Eustache de Boulogne. Cornumarant was sent to Europe to see the renowned Godefroi and try to dispose of him. He arrived finally at the Abbey of Saint Trond near Liège, and was recognised by the Abbé

Gérard, who had been in Jerusalem. He confessed his mission, but asked permission to see Godefroi. A meeting was arranged in such a manner that the spy should be impressed with the grandeur and power of Godefroi. Cornumarant was duly overwhelmed with the display, and the future rivals parted with expressions of mutual esteem.

This manuscript presents a wonderful example of artistic penmanship; and the work of illustration is so beautifully done that one is filled with admiration at its delicacy.

The other one of the two oldest manuscripts, *i. e.*, number 1621 (formerly 7628), is unfortunately incomplete—some of the earliest leaves having been torn out. Messrs. Pigeonneau and Hippeau have both reconstructed the missing part by comparison with other manuscripts, as may be seen in the works of the authors mentioned in the note at the close of this chapter. M. Hippeau reconstructs the text itself, taking the missing lines from manuscript 105; and he states that this merely results in unimportant orthographic differences between the two parts. M. Pigeonneau's reconstruction is only in the form of an abstract, reproducing the substance of the missing leaves by comparison with other manu-

scripts, and particularly with a prose version which seems to correspond closely with the one under consideration. The two writers appear to arrive at practically the same narrative, but it follows that the earliest lines in the story thus given do not necessarily indicate the text of the original manuscript. There can be little doubt that the reconstruction is substantially the same as the part which is lost, but its accuracy can only be inferred, not proved.

However, without discussing details, it may be briefly stated that, from the part of the manuscript which is left to us, certain features of the missing part are clearly indicated. The King is here named Oriant, and he reigns over the country of L'Islefort or Lillefort. His Queen is Beatrix, and his mother's name is Matabrune. The chains are of silver, not of gold as in the previous version, although in one or two instances the material is referred to as gold, but this may possibly have been done to help the rhythm. The child who escapes with his chain is one of the boys instead of the girl; and his name is Elyas. He is led to go to Lillefort; and the incomplete manuscript begins at the point where Elyas arrives just in time to save the life of his mother, who, in this

version, does not die when the children are born, but lives to face a foul accusation.

The manuscript relates that five of the chains are restored to the children, who recover their human form, but one of the boys is obliged to remain a swan, as his chain cannot be found. Oriant abdicates the throne in favour of Elyas, but he in turn relinquishes his authority to one of his brothers, and leaves the country in a boat drawn by his brother, the swan. In due time he arrives at Nimègue, where the Emperor Otto is holding court.

From this point the story of the Swan-Knight follows on practically the same lines as in the earlier version. Cornumarant's journey to Europe is given with more detail, and there is added an account of sundry events after his return to the East.

It is to be noted that the first of the manuscripts mentioned above treats of the Swan-Knight anonymously, while the second manuscript gives him the name Elyas. We have thus apparently an indication of the time when this legendary hero first received the name of Elyas (or Hélias), and it remains to be seen if the date can be fixed with any degree of accuracy.

No reference is made here to the remaining contents of the foregoing manuscripts, as the present studies are confined to the story of the Swan-Knight.

NOTE.—The following books may be mentioned, among others, as giving interesting details on the subject-matter of this chapter:

Histoire Littéraire de la France, vols. xxii (1852) and xxv (1869), articles by A. Paulin Paris.

Les Manuscrits Français de la Bibliothèque du Roi, vol. vi. (1845), A. Paulin Paris.

Le Cycle de la Croisade et de la Famille de Bouillon (1877), H. Pigeonneau.

Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes, vol. ii. (1840–41), Leroux de Lincy.

La Chanson du Chevalier au Cygne, C. Hippeau, 1874.

Romania, vols. xix. (1890), xxiii. (1894), xxviii. (1899), and xxx. (1901).

La Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne (1889), Henry Alfred Todd, in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. iv.

The Romance of the Chevelere Assigne (1868), Henry H. Gibbs.

Chronique Rimée de Philippe Mouskes, edited by Baron de Reiffenberg, 1838.

Monuments pour servir à l'Histoire des Provinces de Namur de Hainaut et de Luxembourg, edited by Baron de Reiffenberg, vols. iv., v., and vi., 1846–1850.

The works of Reiffenberg, Paulin Paris, and Pigeonneau give the most comprehensive treatment of the subject in the light of the information available at their respective periods. With this general indication, it is deemed unnecessary to give foot-note references for the various statements.

CHAPTER V

THE STORY OF HELYAS (CONTINUED)—OTHER POETIC VERSIONS

IN the preceding chapter reference has been made to the earliest two versions of the story, both of which comprise two divisions or parts, viz., the birth of the Swan-Knight, and the early life of Godfrey.

M. Pigeonneau, in his consideration of the *earliest* version (which does not mention Elyas, see MS. 12558), thinks the *second part* (*i. e.*, *Les Enfances de Godefroi*) was composed between 1160 and 1180. He shows that the history of Guillaume de Tyr mentions the prediction of the great future assured to the three sons of Ida, and also the duel in which Godfrey engaged, not mentioned in any previous history; so it seems reasonable to conclude that the version of the Swan-Knight story we are considering existed when Guillaume wrote. Moreover, Cornumarant's journey to Europe is here described as by the land route, which was the customary one up to the time of the Third

Crusade (1189–1192), whereas in other manuscripts the journey is by sea, as was customary *after* the Third Crusade. M. Pigeonneau also calls attention to the passage in *La Chanson d'Antioche*,[1] mentioned in the first chapter of this book, which alludes to the arrival of the Swan Knight at Nimaie and to Godfrey as the Knight's grandson—thus indicating that the story was already in existence at least at the time when that poem was rewritten; and lastly he shows that although there are numerous allusions to current romances, no mention is made of the romances of the Round Table, which were very popular towards the end of the 12th century. On the other hand, as a measure of distance in the other direction, he points out the use of names of historical characters of the first half of the 12th century—among them that of Gérard, who served as abbé of Saint Trond from 1145 to 1156.

[1] This passage has been the subject of some discussion. The poem, as we have seen, is, in its present shape, a revision by Graindor of an earlier work by Richard le Pèlerin; and this latter writer seems to have made free use of prior material originating from certain Latin historians contemporary with the Crusades. No reference can be found in the works of the Latin historians to the material of the passage in question. It was therefore first introduced either by Richard, or by Graindor, or in the oral relation of some *jongleur* whose ideas were incorporated by Graindor into his revision. Apparently no direct evidence has yet been discovered to warrant our assigning it to an earlier hand than Graindor's.

The *first part* of this version (*La Naissance du Chevalier au Cygne*), according to M. Pigeonneau, was written very soon after the second part. The latter, being historical, was probably written first; the romantic and miraculous features would, as customary in these writings, have been added afterwards as embellishments; but he thinks the internal evidence shows that it followed at a very short interval—certainly before the end of the 12th century.

M. Paulin Paris has not assigned any specific date to this version, but he considered it to be earlier than any other; and from his belief regarding the age of the next earlier version, as mentioned beyond, it seems clear that he could not have differed materially from M. Pigeonneau's conclusions

As to the *second* version (which mentions Elyas by name, see MS. 1621), M. Pigeonneau believes that this rewriting of the previous version was made at the end of the 12th century or, at latest, at the very beginning of the 13th century. The principal indication of this is found in a curious feature of the story which is common to many tales of that period, viz., the introduction of prophecies, made by characters in the story, foretelling historical events which the author knew had already occurred. Thus, an author, relating a

story, partly historical and partly romantic, would make one of his characters foretell events which were already historical facts—the object being to throw a glamour of mystery around the individual who prophesied, and thus add to the interest of the story. The abstracts of the Swan-Knight's story mentioned above show instances of this. Now, the prophecy of Calabre in this second version mentions events happening up to the closing years of the 12th century, and makes various genealogical references to that period which M. Pigeonneau considers are sufficient to base the date of authorship as about 1193–1200. M. Paulin Paris corroborates this view. He emphasises the fact that during Calabre's prophecy a cloud arises before her eyes, and she complains she can see no more. She had just mentioned events which took place about the year 1190, so that this year is apparently indicated as the approximate date of composition; and she fails to mention the fall of Constantinople (1204), so it seems more than probable that, if this event had already occurred at the time the poem was written, the appearance of the cloud which obscured Calabre's vision would have been postponed long enough to have allowed her to include this important historical occurrence.

It seems, therefore, reasonably certain that Elyas (or Hélias), as Knight of the Swan, appeared in literature about the end of the 12th century.

A curious point is mentioned by M. Paulin Paris in connection with the birth of Godfrey and his brothers. In the manuscript which gives the oldest form of the story (No. 12558, as above), it is related that Beatrix was informed in a vision that her daughter Ida would give birth to a king, a duke, and a count. Godfrey was elected King of Jerusalem, but when he died, in the year 1100, his brother Baldwin, originally a duke, became King in his stead. Now, if this event had occurred before the story had been written, the author would most likely have allowed Beatrix to know of *two* kings and a count.[1] Such an opportunity of magnifying the glory of her house would not have been missed. Therefore, it seems there is some ground for believing that some part at least of this story may have been current before Godfrey's death in the year 1100.[2] Unless new

[1] This is done in manuscript No. 1621, which, as has been stated, gives the story in a later form.

[2] Reiffenberg in *Monuments pour servir*, etc., vol. iv., Introd., p. cxxxviii., quotes Guillaume de Tyr's account of a statement by Ida to the effect that her first son (Godfrey) will be a duke, the second (Baldwin) a king, and the third (Eustace) a count. According to this, the kingship would

evidence is discovered, however, the first appearance of Elyas is not affected by this theory.

The authorship of these combined stories of *Le Chevalier au Cygne* and *Godefroi* is not clearly defined. No indication is given by the oldest manuscript; the others appear to indicate a writer named Renaus (also Renaut, Renax, Rainsnaus), who was probably not the original author but the rewriter of an earlier form of the work in the same way that Graindor rewrote the balance of the romance, or at least the greater part of it.[1] M. Paulin Paris considers that the author of the oldest form of the story was connected with the Abbey of St. Trond, near Liège, which was regarded as in a special sense under the protection of Godfrey of Bouillon. The question of authorship would, however, apply principally to the second section (*Les Enfances de Godefroi*), since the first section

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belong to Baldwin; but it must be remembered that the passage merely indicates Guillaume's interpretation of the prophecy as given in the original story, and would naturally be affected by Godfrey's brief tenure of office and his unwillingness to accept the title, although actually ruling as king.

[1] There was a French poet named Jehan Renax or Renault, who wrote about the end of the 12th century. In *L'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, vol. xviii., he is identified as the author of this part of *Le Chevalier au Cygne*. Two other works of his are known, viz., the *Lai d'Ignaures*, and the *Lai de l'Ombre et de l'Anneau*.

is practically an adaptation to the history of Godfrey of another legend known as *Les Enfants Changés en Cygnes*, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Our discussion of the poem has thus far been limited to the two manuscripts which give the story in its oldest forms. The other three manuscripts in the Bibliothèque Nationale, and the one in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, may be said to present a slightly different version, with added details, and they also include an additional division of an inferior character.

The earlier versions allow Elyas to pass into obscurity when he departs from his wife and daughter in the swan-boat. Apparently it was thought by the later writers that a reappearance of the hero, and his participation in additional creditable deeds, would add interest to the story. The narrative is therefore expanded. Elyas returns to Lillefort, and, through supernatural assistance, is enabled to recover the chain belonging to the sixth brother, and thus restore him to human form. Elyas builds a château exactly like his former castle at Bouillon, and borrows the name Ardenne to describe the surrounding country. He founds an abbey, which he calls Sainteron (borrowing still another name to perpetuate his

memories of Bouillon), and retires to the monastery to end his days. Ponce and Abbé Gérard, of the original Abbey of Saint Trond, near Liège, have been to the Holy Land. Returning by sea, they land by chance on the shore of Ardenne (!), recognise the reproduction of the Castle of Bouillon, find Elyas, and in due season bring Beatrix and Ida to see him at the monastery, where, not long afterwards, Elyas dies.

A still later poetic version is shown by a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Royale at Brussels. This has been edited and annotated in a most careful manner by Baron de Reiffenberg in his *Monuments pour servir à l'Histoire des Provinces de Namur, de Hainaut, et de Luxembourg*, vols. iv., v., and vi., 1846–1850. An examination of this enormous work inspires the wish that the earlier manuscripts in Paris may at some time be subjected to similar textual criticism and erudite comment, with the certain result of clarifying many of the doubts and uncertainties now attaching to the study of the Swan-Knight legend. Reiffenberg considered this work to be of the 13th century, but later scholarship places it in the following century. This manuscript includes not only the two divisions of the *chanson* under present consideration, but also other divisions—

all being rewritten and revised from the material already existing. The story of Helyas (as he is called here) is considerably enlarged. New features are added, and some features of the early versions are modified or omitted. The narrative of Godfrey's life is continued into the period of his maturity. The details of this story will be alluded to later. It is sufficient to mention here that this version attaches the story to the Netherlands even more closely than those which precede it. In its authorship, as well as in its material, it is closely connected with the region now known as Belgium.

It may be well to note here that another manuscript of this same version is stated to be at Lyons. It gives indications of slightly greater age than the Brussels manuscript.

The British Museum contains a French poetic manuscript (15 E VI, Royal Collection) covering the material of three divisions of the romance, viz., *Hélias*, *Les Enfances*, and *Jérusalem*, and giving a version which corresponds in general with the manuscripts at Paris. There is also a short English poem which seems to be an abstract of the beginning of the French manuscript. This English poem was edited by Utterson in 1820 for the Roxburghe Club, and again by H. H. Gibbs in

1868 for the Early English Text Society under the title, *The Romance of the Chevelere Assigne.*

There is also now in the same Museum another French poetic manuscript which does not appear to have been mentioned heretofore in any of the works which treat of this subject. It bears the number 36.615, and was acquired by the Museum in 1901 at the sale of the manuscripts belonging to the Earl of Ashburnham, known as the Barrois Collection. This collection was formed by M. Paul Barrois, deputy for Lille, and was bought by Lord Ashburnham in 1849. The manuscript is mentioned briefly in the Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum, 1900–1905, where reference is made to a detailed account to be given in the Museum's Catalogue of Romances, Part III. This latter volume is not yet published, so that the information necessary for a full understanding of the manuscript is not yet available. From the incomplete information at hand, the manuscript appears to include all the five divisions of the romance, and to be, so far as the Swan-Knight story is concerned, a combination of the first two versions of the Paris manuscripts mentioned in the preceding chapter. The hero bears the name Hélias. In the catalogue of the Ashburnham sale the manuscript is stated

to be of the 13th century, but the Museum catalogue places it in the early part of the 14th century.

There remains one manuscript to be mentioned in this review. It is referred to by A. G. Krüger in *Romania*, vol. xxiii (1894), who states that the manuscript is in the library at Berne (MS. 627) and that it had not been previously mentioned in the works which treat of the Cycle of the Crusades. The manuscript is considered to be of the 13th century. It does not contain those parts of the cycle known as the *Chanson d'Antioche*, and the *Chanson de Jérusalem;* and it contains no reference to the origin and childhood of the Swan-Knight, which, as we have seen in a previous chapter, is believed to have been added to an already existing story of *Les Enfances de Godefroi*. This latter reason, among others, leads Prof. Krüger to believe that this manuscript may have been prepared from some version which is earlier than any of those now known. In a recent issue of the same publication, vol. xxxviii. (1909), Prof. Hugh A. Smith treats this subject in detail, and dissents from the conclusion that an unknown earlier version was the basis of the Berne manuscript.

Another interesting feature of this manuscript

is the connection which it indicates between the city of Mayence and the legend of the Swan-Knight. There is a passage in the poem where the author refers to the fact that the story has already been related; and the place where this relation has been made is given as Nimaie (Nimègue) in the oldest Paris version; but in the Berne manuscript, and in other manuscripts at Paris, Mayence is mentioned. Now it happens that "Mayence" rhymes with the adjacent lines, while "Nimaie" does not; so the question arises whether an original "Nimaie" was changed to "Mayence" in order to complete the rhyme, or whether an original "Mayence" was altered to "Nimaie" by the copyist for reasons not stated. This will illustrate a certain confusion which exists in the different manuscripts in regard to other references to the two cities mentioned above. The subject is considered in detail by M. Gaston Paris in *Romania*, vol. xxx, where the writer reaches the conclusion that the original French version placed the arrival of the Swan-Knight at Mayence, and that the allusions to Nimègue are changes made by later copyists for reasons not stated. It remains to be seen if later research will confirm this opinion, which, although apparently reasonable, nevertheless leaves unexplained the motive

which in such case may have prompted the original writer to locate this part of the story so far away from what appear to be its natural surroundings.

CHAPTER VI

THE LEGEND OF THE SWAN-CHILDREN

THERE was current in the Middle Ages a collection of stories probably originating in the Orient, and conveyed thence orally, in whole or in part, to Europe, which may be generally described in the Oriental forms as the *Book of Sindibad*, and in the European forms as *The Seven Sages* (sometimes, *The Seven Sages of Rome*). The work is believed to have originated in India, but in the Eastern form there are versions in Hebrew, Greek, Syriac, Persian, Arabic, and Old Spanish, so that it is not strange if variations exist in the titles and in the texts; and no one form can be identified as the original.

Generally speaking, the romance treats of a prince who has incurred the displeasure of his father the king, and is consequently in danger of death. An opportunity is afforded to prolong his life by means of the recital of stories by seven wise men who thus engage the attention of the king over a corresponding number of days.

Four of the stories in the Eastern versions are found also in the Western versions; the remaining three are not found in the Western versions, nor are these latter identical in their contents.

One of the Western versions bears the title *Dolopathos*, being so called after a king of that name who is said to have reigned over Sicily; and it is this version which has a direct interest in the line of our present inquiries, since the seventh story in the collection tells of the children changed into swans—being almost identical with the introduction to the story of the Swan-Knight as related in the previous chapter, except that no names are given to the characters in the story. In fact, the title is *Cygni Eques*, "The Knight of the Swan."

Until a comparatively recent date, the earliest known form of the *Dolopathos* story was a French poem by Herbers (or Herbert), written early in the 13th century, which was an expanded translation of an earlier Latin work in prose by Jean, a monk at the Monastery of Haute Seille. In 1873 a complete Latin manuscript of Jean's work was discovered at the Bibliothèque de l'Athenæum at Luxembourg. It bears the title, *Dolopathos sive opusculum de rege et septem sapientibus, i.e.*, "Dolopathos, or the little work about the King

and the Seven Sages." Its date can be fixed as between the year 1179 and the earliest years of the following century, but as the work only served to record in this form material which either existed already in other written versions or was current through oral communication, a still earlier date must be assigned to the stories themselves. The stories in the *Dolopathos* version which correspond with any one or all of the other versions, Eastern or Western, are, by the fact of such correspondence, apparently connected with a rather remote past; but the story of the Swan-Children, on the other hand, has no such indication, either as to its origin or its age. It was clearly taken from a tale orally current at that period, but there is no evidence on which to construct a theory as to the length of its previous existence.

The feature of special interest in this story is a passage which states that one of the boys could not be changed back to human form; and it continues in the following words: "*Hic est cignus de quo fama in æternum perseverat quod cathena aurea militem in navicula trahat armatum,*" *i.e.*, "This is the swan whose fame lasts for ever, because with a golden chain he draws an armed soldier in a little boat." Thus the legend of the Swan-Children, already current orally, is

coupled with the legend of the Swan-Knight—the latter story being referred to in a way which implies that it also was well-known and did not call for extended reference. We have then two nearly identical tales, (a) the *Dolopathos* version of the seven children with its brief reference to the Swan-Knight story as a current tale, and (b) the earliest Paris version of *Le Chevalier au Cygne*, in which the story of the Swan-Children is used as an introduction to an expanded narrative of the adventures of the Swan-Knight.

The exact relation of these two stories to one another is not yet understood. The tale of the Swan-Children in *Dolopathos* presents some indications of a more primitive character than the corresponding part of the Paris version, but it does not follow that the latter was based on the former as an original. In fact the Paris story may have antedated the other so far as the time of composition is concerned. It appears to be now generally believed that the literary works which contain our earliest known versions of these two stories are not the earliest forms in which the stories appeared; but that there were some earlier forms in which they existed, separately or joined together, which have never been discovered. It would be unprofitable to attempt to construct any

theory on the scanty evidence available. In fact it may be thought that we have already wandered too far from our consideration of Helyas and his appearance in literature; but the foregoing details have been given to indicate the possibility that the last word about Helyas may not have been said, and that he may yet be shown to have been a character in literature at an earlier date than has heretofore been supposed.

The legend of the Swan-Children seems to be in some way closely related to the region of Lotharingia (*i.e.*, Lorraine), where some writers believe it originated. Here at the Monastery of Haute Seille it was preserved in the early form mentioned above; and since the tale of the Swan-Knight was evidently then and there a familiar one, the theory that this also originated in that region may yet prove to be true. It is interesting to note that the German name of the province, Lothringen, is the source of the name Lohengrin, which may suggest a reason for Wolfram von Eschenbach's identification of Parzival's son with the current story of the Knight of the Swan.

A version of this tale is also found in *La Gran Conquista de Ultramar*, mentioned in the first chapter of this book, where Isomberte, the daughter of King Popleo, is discovered by Count

Eustache de Portemise and becomes his wife. The framework of the story corresponds with the French versions, but with different proper names as shown above; and it is, like the French versions, used as an introduction to the Swan-Knight legend.

An Italian story exists in several editions from the 16th century onwards called *Historia della Regina Stella e Matabrune*, which is very similar to the tale of the Swan-Children and is apparently derived from that tale, but says nothing about the metamorphosis of the children into swans, and makes no mention of the Swan-Knight. This has been published, with comments, by A. G. Krüger in the *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* for 1892, under the title, *An Italian Metrical Version of the Knight of the Swan*. It is interesting as a sidelight on our subject, but is not directly connected with the Knight of the Swan.

A thorough consideration of the legend of the Swan-Children would involve investigations entirely outside the scope of this book. It would lead us into the vast field of folk-lore. The old Celtic tale of *The Fate of the Children of Lir*, or *The Four White Swans*, is, for instance, a somewhat analogous story which indicates a connection of some kind; and it may be that, as research

progresses, some new light may be thrown on the subject which will show that the story did not *originate* in Lorraine; but even in this case the particular development of an ancient legend along the lines mentioned in this chapter would not necessarily be called in question.

NOTE.—This tale is the special subject of Prof. Todd's work mentioned in the note at the end of the previous chapter; and this in turn was reviewed in detail by M. Gaston Paris in *Romania*, vol. xix., 1890. See also reviews of the prose version of *Dolopathos*, by M. Gaston Paris, in *Romania*, vol. ii. (1873), and of the poetic version by M. Le Roux de Lincy, Paris, 1838; also, *A Study of the Romance of the Seven Sages*, by Killis Campbell, in *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* for 1899; also, an article in *Romania*, vol. xxxiv. (1905).

CHAPTER VII

"LE CHEVALIER AU CYGNE"—PROSE VERSIONS

THE references in preceding chapters to the story *Le Chevalier au Cygne* have been confined to the poetical forms of its earliest appearances and later development. It was a *chanson;* and it retained that form, for the most part, until the revision of the entire romance comprised in the Brussels manuscript, which probably took place in the 14th century. After this period the poetical versions ceased to appear.

The *chansons de geste* were written for hearers rather than for readers. In the course of time there was a demand for prose renovations of these stories, generally resulting in considerable abbreviation of the interminably expanded narratives of the older forms, and, consequently, in a greater suitability for general use. The earliest known prose version of the complete story of *Le Chevalier au Cygne* is contained in a manuscript in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris—number 781, formerly 7188. It apparently represents

an abstract of the second earliest poetic version (*i.e.*, MS. 1621 in which Elyas is mentioned) and is considered by M. Pigeonneau to date from about 1220 to 1240.[1] To what extent other prose versions existed at that early time is not now known; but, unless there are undiscovered manuscripts which may yet see the light of day, there were singularly few prose versions of this particular *chanson* produced in the following three centuries. There are examples in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and at the Royal Museum at Copenhagen; and the existence of others may be reported in the course of time. These prose versions belong, however, to a time far removed from the original appearance of the romance, and they present no features of special interest in the line of our present investigations. Moreover, these manuscripts have not been edited, so we are deprived of the interesting information which the critical comment of scholars might furnish.

The career of Godfrey of Bouillon formed the subject of several printed books which appeared from the latter part of the 15th century onward. Caxton printed in 1481 at Westminster *Godefroy of Boloyne, or the laste siege and conqueste of Jherusalem, with many histories therein comprised,*

[1] *Le Cycle de la Croisade*, etc., p. 186.

translated and reduced out of French into English by me simple person W. Caxton. This was, however, merely a retranslation of a French version of the Latin history of Guillaume de Tyr, and it did not cover the story of Godfrey's miraculous descent from the Swan-Knight. There was also a similar book printed in Augsburg by Hans Baemler in 1482, which is now apparently out of existence; but it was re-issued in the same city in 1502 under the title, *Herzog Godfried wie er wider die Türgen und Hayden gestritten*, etc.; and a Flemish version published at Haarlem about 1486 is also known. These German and Flemish books, like Caxton's, appear to be based on Guillaume's history and other Latin chronicles, and they have no connection with the Swan-Knight story.

There is a book which tells the story of Helyas, printed at Antwerp by Heyliger, under the title *Eene Schoone Historie van den Ridder van avontueren Helias, genaemd den Ridder met de Zwaen;* but this unfortunately bears no date, so its age is uncertain. It is not believed to be nearly as old as those mentioned in the preceding paragraph. According to Pigeonneau,[1] the great manuscript at Madrid which we have mentioned in

[1] *Le Cycle de la Croisade*, p. 248.

Chapter I. was put into print at Salamanca in 1503 by Hans Giessen, but the title of the book is not stated. It should be remembered, however, that this manuscript covers a mass of material not connected with the story of the Swan-Knight, so the appearance of this legend in the book in question is merely incidental.

It is in France that we find a publication which, if not the earliest printed prose version of the story of Helyas, is certainly the most interesting of them all. The full title of this book is as follows: *La généalogie avecques les gestes et nobles faictz d'armes du très preux et renommé prince Godeffroy de Boulion: et de ses chevaleureux frères Baudouin et Eustace: yssus et descendus de la très noble et illustre lignée du vertueux Chevalier au Cygne. Avecques aussi plusieurs autres croniques d'histoires miraculeuses: tant du bon roy Sainct Loys comme de plusieurs aultres puissans et vertueux chevaliers.* It was prepared by Pierre d'Esrey or Desrey of Troyes, and dedicated to Louis XII. and the Comte de Nevers. This book, in the earliest form in which it now exists, was printed at Paris by Jehan Petit in 1504. In this edition, however, the preface is dated 1499, which would of itself indicate that the edition of 1504 may not have been the earliest one issued. It is evident

that this book was known widely, and considered a work of importance. This is shown by the number of editions which were issued; but there are singular discrepancies in the bibliographical references to its various appearances, and the title itself has been subjected to modification, without, however, undergoing any material change. In *L'Histoire Littéraire de la France*, vol. xviii., p. 473, four issues of the book are mentioned, viz., 1449, 1500, 1511, and 1589. The first of these dates is evidently a typographical error, since it is even earlier than the date of the Gutenberg Bible. It should probably be 1499. Brunet's *Manuel du Libraire*, etc., 1861, mentions the following editions, viz., Paris, 1511 (folio, Michel le Noir, printer); Paris, 1523 (4to, Philippe le Noir, printer); Lyons, 1580 (8vo, François Arnoullet, printer); and two Paris quarto editions without date issued by Nicholas Chrestien (who worked about 1550) and Jehan Bonfons (who died 1568). Hoefer's *Nouvelle Biographie Générale* (Firmin Didot Frères, Paris, 1855) cites the three dated editions alluded to by Brunet, and adds others, as follows, viz., Paris, 1499, folio, and 1500, 4to; and Lyons, 1585 and 1589, both 12mo. Whatever may be the explanation of the strange discrepancies in the enumeration of these various

editions in bibliographical works of about the same period, it becomes quite clear that the book was regarded as one of unusual interest. The dates of Desrey's birth and death are unknown, but he has left several works dating from the latter part of the 15th century and early part of the 16th century. In his preface of 1499 Desrey indicates certain Latin chronicles as the source of his work; but this statement evidently refers only to that part of the history which treats of the public life of Godfrey and his brothers. The early chapters, which tell of the origin and childhood of Godfrey, have no connection with any of these Latin chronicles. They give in detail the same story as *Le Chevalier au Cygne;* and they are, in fact, almost identical with the story of Helyas as related in the Brussels manuscript mentioned in Chapter V., with the exception that the narrative is here in prose.

Desrey's book has a special interest for English readers. *The History of Godfrey of Bouillon* issued by Caxton, the first English printer, has been mentioned above. The translation and publication of this work was very likely a result, to some extent, of Caxton's sojourn of about thirty years in the Netherlands. At Bruges, where he did his first printing, he had the oppor-

tunity of consulting the literary treasures of the famous library of Louis, Count of Gruuthuuse; and his connection with the household of Margaret of Burgundy opened the way for literary work. It is therefore not strange that he should have issued, soon after his return to England, the English translation of Godfrey's life. This, however, as we have seen, did not touch upon the story of the miraculous origin of the hero; so it naturally followed that Wynkyn de Worde, Caxton's assistant and successor, should have printed in 1512 a translation of the early chapters of Desrey's book under the title *The Knyght of the Swanne* ("Here begynneth the hystory of the noble Helyas knyght of the swanne, newly translated out of frensshe into englysshe at thynstygacyon of the puyssaunt and illustryous Prynce lorde Edwarde Duke of Buckyngham"). The translator's preface shows that the work of translation was done by Robert Copland, and that his patron the Duke of Buckingham claimed descent from the Swan-Knight. Only one copy of this book is now known to exist, viz., a copy printed on vellum which is in the library of the late Robert Hoe, Esq., of New York. Mr. Hoe stated that this book came into his possession from the library of Lord Methuen. A reprint of Wynkyn de

Worde's book was made by William Copland (son of Robert); and of this latter there is only one known copy in existence, which may be found in the British Museum.

These reproductions of Desrey's book by Wynkyn de Worde and William Copland are generally considered to be mere translations of the original book, but there must have been at least some modification in the arrangement of the material, since Desrey's book contains only thirty-eight chapters while the two reproductions contain forty-three chapters.[1]

A facsimile of Wynkyn de Worde's book was issued in 1901 by the Grolier Club of New York, with an introduction by Mr. Hoe.[2] It is a beautiful example of facsimile reproduction—not only in the typographical work, but also in the quaint woodcuts which illustrate the original book.

In this publication of de Worde we have the

[1] The contents of Wynkyn de Worde's book were inserted from William Copland's reprint into *A Collection of Early English Prose Romances* by W. J. Thoms, London, 1858, vol. iii. In the preface a certain passage is mentioned as contained in the 17th chapter of Desrey's book and the 20th chapter of the reproduction. There is no indication of the cause or extent of the variation.

[2] *The History of Helyas, Knight of the Swan*, translated by Robert Copland from the French version published in Paris in 1504, etc., etc. The Grolier Club, New York, 1901.

latest and fullest development of the story of Helyas. Since this form of the Swan-Knight story is not widely known, and is in fact so difficult to obtain, an abstract of the narrative, omitting some coarse details, is given below.

In the rich kingdom of Lylefort, "otherwise named The Strong Isle," there reigned a King, by name Pyeron. His Queen was Matabrune, and their son was named Oryant (Oriant), who, after his father's death, succeeded to the throne. One day, while hunting, Oryant met an attractive maiden, Beatrice by name—evidently of high birth, as she was accompanied by a retinue of attendants. She informed Oryant that he was a trespasser on her lands. The latter, on the other hand, told the maiden that he was the King, and therefore only exercising his sovereign right of hunting where he wished. Oryant was, however, so well pleased with the maiden that he asked her to be his wife, and she accepted him. The plan proved to be a disappointment to the Queen-mother, who was ambitious that her son should connect himself with some princely family; and while she yielded finally to her son's wishes, she nevertheless began plotting at once to make trouble.

Some time after the marriage, Oryant was called

away to defend his kingdom against enemies, and he left Beatrice in his mother's care. The Queen-mother promised the most affectionate attention to the young Queen, but nevertheless determined to do everything possible to accomplish her ruin. In due season, Beatrice was delivered of seven children, six sons and one daughter, each having a chain of silver around the neck. Matabrune accused Beatrice of a foul crime, and gave the children to her secretary Markes to be drowned. When he was at some distance from the city, he repented of his promise to kill the little ones, and concluded to leave them in the forest—apparently in hopes that they might be found and cared for. Here they were discovered by a hermit named Helyas, who took them to his hermitage and was able to provide for their nourishment by the miraculously opportune arrival of a white goat.

On the King's return from his wars he was deceived by erroneous reports of the Queen's conduct; and although he was unwilling to put her to death, he nevertheless cast her into prison, but gave orders that she should be well cared for.

Meanwhile the hermit was watching over the seven little children, and in due time he baptised them, giving one of them his own name, Helyas. One day, while they were playing in the

THE BROTHERS AND SISTER OF HELYAS TURNING INTO SWANS WHEN THE CHAINS WERE TAKEN FROM THEIR NECKS

(Copied, by permission, from the Grolier Club's book The Story of Helyas, Knight of the Swan.)

forest, they were seen by a yeoman, Savary by name, who served Matabrune. He reported the discovery to the Queen-mother, who promptly despatched Savary and other men to kill the children, but these men also revolted from the task which was given them, and decided that they would bring back the chains of silver from the children's necks, and tell Matabrune that the little ones were dead. It happened that the hermit had gone to a neighbouring village, taking little Helyas with him, so there were only six children left at the hermitage. When Matabrune's men discovered the children they began to take the silver chains from them, but, to their astonishment, as soon as the chains were taken the children were instantly turned into white swans. Savary and his men delivered the chains to Matabrune, accounting for the shortage of one chain by saying it had been lost on the way home. The Queen-mother ordered a goldsmith to make a cup out of the six chains, but when the work was begun, it was seen that one chain alone, when melted, produced in some miraculous way enough silver to make two cups; so the goldsmith retained one of these cups together with the five other chains, hiding the treasure away, and giving Matabrune the one cup for which she had asked.

The Queen-mother continued to plot against Beatrice, and, with the aid of a knight named Makayre, she caused the King to become so enraged against the Queen that a royal decree was issued for the latter's death unless she should find some knight to make a successful defence of her cause in a contest held for that purpose.

Meanwhile the good hermit had not ceased to mourn the loss of the six little children whom he had cared for so tenderly; and one night he received from an angelic messenger a revelation of their true history. He told the whole story to young Helyas, adding that the angel had announced that the young man should be the successful defender of his mother's life, and that from his lineage would come a prince who would be called Godfrey of Boulyon, and who would be the conqueror of Jerusalem.

In due time the day arrived for the public condemnation of Queen Beatrice at the city of Lylefort, after sixteen years' imprisonment. In the middle of the proceedings, Helyas arrived, and announced his errand, telling the King the story that had been revealed to his godfather the hermit. Oryant promptly consulted the hermit and obtained a full corroboration of Helyas' story. He presented the hermit with a large sum of money

for the establishment of a church, and on his return home he delivered Beatrice from captivity and cast Matabrune into prison. The duel took place, and Makayre was vanquished. He made a full confession, and was hanged.

Alarmed by the course of affairs, Matabrune escaped from prison and took refuge in her castle Maubruyant.

Helyas, having recovered the five remaining silver chains, determined to seek again the white swans into which his brothers and sister had been changed, and he was consequently delighted to see the six swans suddenly appear upon the river near the palace. Greeting them joyously, he commenced to place the chains around their necks; and, to his amazement, the five swans which received the chains were changed back into his sister and four of his brothers. The remaining swan was overcome with grief at his sad fate, but was comforted by the royal family.

After these occurrences Oryant abdicated his throne in favour of Helyas, leaving him to deal with Matabrune as he wished. Helyas took an armed force, captured the castle of Maubruyant, and burned the wicked Matabrune.

Some time after, Helyas was looking towards the river from his palace at Lylefort,when he saw

the swan, which was his brother, leading a boat to the wharf near the palace. Recognising a supernatural sign, he concluded that God wished him to go somewhere to do His will; so he resigned to his father's hands the rule of the kingdom, and took leave of Lylefort. Guided by the swan, he went "from river to river" to the city of Nymaie as is hereafter related.

At this time Otton, the first of that name, was Emperor of Almayne, and ruled also over the land of Dardayne, of Lyege, and of Nammur. The Emperor was holding a court of justice at Nymaie, and in due course he heard the case of the Earl of Frankebourke against his sister-in-law Clarisse, the Duchess of Boulyon, accusing her of having poisoned his brother. The Earl claimed the duchy and attacked the legitimacy of the daughter. The Earl offered to settle the dispute by mortal combat, and the Emperor directed the Duchess to select her defender. At this moment a horn, blown loudly, attracted the attention of the assembly, and looking out of the windows they saw Helyas appearing in his boat, led by the swan. The Duchess had dreamed the previous night that relief would come through the appearance of a swan, and she was now filled with hope. Helyas, having entered the hall, was informed of the pro-

HELYAS IN COMBAT DEFENDING THE HONOR OF THE DUCHESS OF BOUILLON

(Copied, by permission, from the Grolier Club's book The Story of Helyas, Knight of the Swan.)

ceedings under discussion; and the Emperor suggested that he defend the Duchess in the combat, promising that if he were successful he might have the Duchess' daughter in marriage. Helyas won a complete victory and put his adversary to death. The marriage followed, and Helyas was created Duke of Boulyon.

The newly-created Duke with his wife returned shortly to Boulyon, where they were received triumphantly, and after a time a daughter was born to them, who was called Ydain.

One day the Duchess asked her husband from what country he came, but he forbade her to refer to the subject, stating that if she did so he would have to go away forever. She restrained her curiosity for several years, but finally she repeated the question, and soon found how serious were the consequences. The swan arrived with the little ship, and Helyas departed for Nymaie, affectionately commending his wife and daughter to the knights attached to the court, who were to accompany the ladies to Nymaie for the final farewell. There he explained to the Emperor that he must go back to the country whence he came, and, leaving his wife and daughter in the Emperor's care, he entered the little ship that was in waiting, and was guided by the swan back

to Lylefort. On arriving here, after eight years' absence, he was warmly welcomed by his family.

Guided by a dream which his mother had dreamt, they ordered the goldsmith to make two chalices out of the two cups which had been fashioned out of the chain of silver. They placed these upon two altars, and then laid the swan between the altars, and while the mass was being said the swan was changed into human form and the entire family was thus reunited. The brother thus restored was baptised Emery, and there was great rejoicing.

After a time Helyas was minded to go to the site of the hermitage where his father had erected a monastery, and devote himself to a religious life. There he built a castle like the one he had left at Boulyon, and called it by the same name. He made the place a centre of trade for the benefit of the monastery.

The Emperor Otton in due season married Helyas' daughter Ydain to Eustace, Earl of Boleyn. In the course of years three sons were born to them, Godfrey, Baudwyn, and Eustace.

Meanwhile the Duchess of Boulyon had sent messengers to divers countries to find her husband. One of these, a knight named Ponce, sought Helyas at Jerusalem, thinking that he might have made a pilgrimage there. One day he met an

abbot clothed after the fashion of a French order, who gave his name as Gyrarde, Abbot of Saincteron, in Gaul, not far from Boulyon. They arranged to return home together, and, after much travelling, they arrived in a region which they could not identify but which was in fact the vicinity of the new castle of Boulyon, built by Helyas, as a copy of the original castle of Boulyon. They seemed to recognise the castle, but found the surroundings unfamiliar. Seeking information, they learned that the castle they saw was called "Boulyon le restaure" (*i.e.*, restored) and that it was built by a virtuous knight called Helyas, son of King Oryant. The whole story was told to them, including the reason for naming the castle after the original one, and the forest around it Dardayne, in like manner. They were also informed how the King and Queen had come to dwell there in the castle. Ponce and the abbot were first received by the King and his family, and then were conducted to the religious house where Helyas was found at his devotions. Helyas stated that he could not leave the life he had begun, but he sent affectionate messages to his wife and daughter.

Ponce returned then to Boulyon in Dardayne where he found the Duchess of Boulyon and the

Countess of Bouleyn, and related the successful termination of his search. The ladies set out at once to find Helyas, and they arrived at the monastery in due season, but found Helyas sick unto death. Not long thereafter Helyas died, and the Duchess was so stricken with grief that she lived but a short time. The two were buried before the high altar of the church, and Ydain returned to Boulyon, where she now held the rank of duchess. She trained her three sons diligently in all virtues, and finally sent the eldest, Godfrey, to the Emperor at Nymaie to receive knighthood. In course of time Godfrey became Duke of Boulyon, and crowned his career by delivering the city of Jerusalem from the Saracens.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CLÈVE LEGEND, AND THE ORDER OF THE SWAN

OUR consideration of this legend would not be complete without some reference to its association with the ancient city of Clève and the duchy which bears its name. The so-called Clève legend is not of itself materially different from the form of the story heretofore related, except in respect to the omission to connect the Swan-Knight with Godfrey of Bouillon, and the absence of any reference to the story of the Swan-Children. Nor is there, on the other hand, any material variation in the numerous tales which are connected with this city and duchy. The essential point of these stories seems to be an attempt to trace a genealogical connection between the legendary hero and the house of Clève. Similar attempts have been made also in regard to other ducal houses of the Netherlands, but in no case to such an extent as with the Counts and Dukes of Clève.

The earliest reference to this particular develop-

ment of the legend is found in *Der Schwanritter*, of Konrad von Wurtzburg, dating from the middle of the 13th century.[1] The tradition itself may have existed a little earlier. Konrad's poem has already been mentioned in Chapter II., where it was cited as one of the literary works considered by Wagner in preparing his version of Lohengrin. Although of German authorship, the *Schwanritter* poem does not follow the lines of Wolfram's story of Lohengrin. Strange as it may seem, Konrad's hero is anonymous, and the locality of the story is the city of Nijmegen (Nimègue). Briefly told, the narrative is as follows:

Duke Godefroid of Brabant left at his death his domains to the Duchess and her daughter.

[1] *Cf. Le Cycle de la Croisade*, etc., p. 241; also an article by M. Gaston Paris in *Romania*, vol. xxvii., p. 334, expressing assent to a similar opinion indicated by Prof. Blöte in *Zeitschrift für Deutsches Altertum*, vol. xlii. Reiffenberg, in his *Monuments pour servir à l'Histoire*, etc. (vol. iv., Introd., p. lxiii.), refers to the *Chronique de Brogne* (written about 1211) and indicates that the heroine of the Swan-Knight story is therein given as Beatrix of Clève. This, if correct, would show a reference to the Clève legend about half a century earlier than the time mentioned above; but Prof. Blöte, when discussing *Die Sage vom Schwanritter in der Brogner Chronik* (*Zeitschrift für Deutsches Altertum*, 1900), says that the heroine was the Queen of Lotharingia, and apparently finds no reference to Clève in this Chronicle. It is not necessary to inquire into this curious contradiction since it does not materially affect the statement in the text above.

Her brother, the Duke of Saxony, claimed the duchy. The Duchess appealed to King Charles, who held court at Nijmegen. The Swan-Knight arrived on the scene, espoused the cause of the Duchess, was victorious in the combat, and married the Duchess' daughter. After a time, in accordance with the regular form of the story, the hero's wife asked the forbidden questions, and he departed for ever. From their union two children were born, from whom descended the Dukes of Clève and of Guelders, and other princely houses.

The historical identification of Duke Godefroid and of King Charles is not clearly established, but this is a minor matter. The approximate date of the poem itself is known; and any duke and king in any prior period would answer its purpose, since it was not written as a historical document.

We cannot, of course, now tell what influenced Konrad to make this modification in the form of the story related by his great compatriot Wolfram. The genealogical possibilities of the Swan-Knight legend had evidently been noticed by other writers of that period. A manuscript of Arras of the 13th century has been mentioned, containing a genealogy of the Counts of Flanders, and stating

that "Eustachius as Gernons" married Ida, the daughter of the Duchess of Bouillon and "Miles Cigni."[1]

Later writers relate the same story with unimportant modifications—particularly in the first half of the 15th century, after the duchy of Clève had been created. One of them places the time of the story in the year 711 at a time when a certain Dietrich (or Theodoric, or Thierri), first Count of Clève, married his daughter Beatrix to the Swan-Knight, Hélias, who arrived at Clève in his mysterious boat by way of the Rhine. Three sons were born of this marriage, Dietrich, Gottfried, and Konrad, who divided their father's possessions at his death, and thus prepared the way for the development of the genealogical pretensions of the various divisions of the family of Clève. Another writer tells a story which is practically the same as the foregoing but places the meeting of Beatrix and the Swan-Knight at Nijmegen.

In these various stories the hero's name is generally given as Hélias or some phonetic equivalent of that name, thus connecting the narrative unquestionably with the romance of *Le Chevalier*

[1] Reiffenberg's *Monuments pour servir*, etc., vol. iv., introd., p. viii.

au Cygne; but in others the name has undergone some modifications. In a scarce book entitled *Handbuch für Reisende am Rhein* (Aloys Schreiber, Heidelberg, n.d.) the hero who wins the hand of Beatrix is named Erlin von der Schwanenburg. He comes from Antioch via the Rhine, bearing a letter from the Count of Clève which is intended to open the way for his marriage with Beatrix. This is evidently merely one of the many forms of the same legend, especially as the three children bear the same names as those given in the preceding paragraph.

In other modifications of the story the hero is called Élias Gralius or Gracilis, or Élie Grail. One of these stories,[1] in which the hero is called Élie Grail, relates practically the same narrative which is referred to above; but in the case of other writers this title is considered to have a special significance, suggesting a broader field. In one case, the knight is represented as a descendant of a prominent Roman family, since Tacitus mentions one of the governors of Belgic Gaul under the name Ælius Gracilis; while other writers see in this form of the hero's name an indication of an attempt to connect the legend of the Swan-

[1] *Cf. Voyage fait en 1813 et 1814 dans le pays entre Meuse et Rhin*, Baron de la Doucette, Paris, 1818.

Knight with the Arthurian romances and the story of the Holy Grail.

Thus the time of the occurrences and the characters in the story were changed to suit the tastes of the various writers, but always with the same underlying purpose, viz., to increase the antiquity of the house of Clève and thus magnify its importance. There is no object, however, in endeavouring to trace in detail the various ramifications of this legend in its connection with the house of Clève. The persistent attempts to glorify that house by expanding its genealogical records were no doubt inspired by a praiseworthy local pride, but they belong to romance rather than to history.

We should, however, take note of one historical incident which brought the Clève legend into prominence. In the middle of the 15th century, when the house of Burgundy ruled also over the greater part of the Netherland provinces, Philip the Good gave a great banquet at Lille preparatory to the announcement of a crusade for the recovery of Constantinople. His court was magnificent, far outranking in splendour that of the King of France; and the banquet referred to, known as the Fête du Faisan, which was held in the early part of the year 1454, was planned on a scale of the

greatest extravagance. Just prior to this banquet, and preliminary to it, Adolph of Clève, Philip's nephew, gave a fête, at which it was announced that at the Duke's banquet soon to follow, he, Adolph, would enter the lists at a tournament in the character of "*Le Chevalier au Cygne, serviteur des dames,*" prepared to meet any antagonist; and that the victor of the tournament would be rewarded with a golden swan and a golden chain. To give emphasis to this announcement, the principal table at Adolph's banquet was decorated with an immense representation of the Swan-Knight, bearing the arms of Clève, and arriving at the castle in his little boat drawn by the swan according to the legend. The historian Olivier de la Marche, who was attached to Philip's court, has described the incident, and has stated that he was informed of its special significance in emphasising the direct descent of the Dukes of Clève from the mysterious Swan-Knight.[1] Evidently the historians of Clève were determined to keep alive the traditions which cast a mysterious glamour around their reigning house.

There are references to a hereditary Order of the Swan which it is claimed was founded at an early date in commemoration of the Swan-

[1] See *Mémoires* d'Olivier de la Marche, Book I, chap. xxix.

Knight's visit to Clève, but there is little that is really known about it.

The seeker after historical facts will find the references to this Order few in number and unsatisfactory in character. It is claimed by some that the Order was founded by Hélias after his marriage at Clève. Others state that the founder was Salvius Brabo, a local personification of the Swan-Knight who was supposed to have lived at the time of Julius Cæsar, and to whom we shall allude in a later chapter. These references are, however, of a suspiciously indefinite character; and this fact suggests the desirability of caution in forming conclusions.[1] Even so early as 1719 a book published in Paris under the title *Histoire des Ordres Monastiques, Religieux, et Militaires* made brief mention of the Order in a concluding chapter which treated of "*plusieurs ordres militaires faux et supposés,*" thus indicating a doubt as to the historical accuracy of the claims made with respect to this Order. On the other hand, in *A Concise History of Knighthood* by Hugh Clarke (London, 1784, vol. i., p. 205) will be found the following passage:

[1] See for example *Dictionnaire de la Conversation et de la Lecture*, 2d edition, Paris, 1868, vol. vii.; also *Dictionnaire des Ordres Religieux*, etc., Paris, 1847, vol. i.

"This Order is said to have been instituted in Flanders by Salvius Brabo of Brabant about the year 500 [*sic*] but very little is known relative to the Order, except that the badge of it was a swan enamelled white, on a green ground adorned with flowers, and that it was worn at the breast pendant to three chains of gold. Having been upwards of one thousand years extinct it is unnecessary to say anything further upon it here." This passage is accompanied by an illustration of the badge and triple chain, from which facts one might infer that there was some basis for the truth of the statement; but it must be noted that this reputed founder was, according to the legend, a contemporary of Julius Cæsar, so he could not have lived in the year 500, as mentioned above.

It is also stated that in the year 1615 Charles de Gonzague de Clève, Duke of Nemours, made an effort to re-establish the Order, so we may fairly conclude that there was at some prior date such an organisation in existence. Some evidence on the subject (but not entirely satisfactory in character) is obtained from an exceedingly rare book[1] published at Basle in 1780 under the title

[1] No copy of this book is contained in the Libraries of Harvard, Yale, or Columbia Universities, the University of Pennsylvania, the New York Public Library, the Boston Public Library, or the British Museum. Two copies exist

"*Histoire de l'Ordre héréditaire du Cigne, dit l'Ordre Souverain de Clève, ou du Cordon d'Or*, par M. le Comte de Bar." It is well to acknowledge at the outset that the testimony thus obtained should be used with some reserve. Reiffenberg states that although the author describes himself as "Antoine François le Paige de Bar, conte titulaire de Bar-sur-Seine et du Saint Empire," these titles were self-conferred, since the author was nothing more than a curé at Laerne in Flanders. Pigeonneau also alludes to the book, but characterises the author with the brief description "half archæologist, half maniac"!

The book treats at some length of the Swan-Knight legend, of which only three accounts seem to be known to the author, viz.: Veldenaer's *Chronique de Clève*, printed in 1480, the *Chronique de Brogne*, written in 1211, and a work by Lambert d'Ardres in the time of Philip Augustus. Of these, the first is the only one which specifically connects the legend with Clève. The author states that the Order of the Swan was instituted in 1290 by the Emperor Rodolphe I. at the occasion of the marriage of his daughter Marguérite of Hapsburg to Thierri IX., Count of Clève, in order

in the Bibliothèque Royale at Brussels, as also one copy of a second volume which was issued in 1782.

to celebrate the miraculous event of the arrival of an unknown knight in a boat drawn by a swan at Nimègue, or, as some said, at Meghem. It was founded as a *hereditary* Order; and the Emperor conferred the title of Chevalier of the Order upon representatives of all the collateral branches of the house of Count Thierri in order to attach the house inseparably to the Order. A detailed account is given of the genealogical records of the first twelve Chevaliers of the Order, all of whom died between 1293 and 1328; and, in the second volume, the genealogical records are continued with the apparent object of showing incidentally that the author was in the direct line of descent, and therefore entitled to claim membership.

There seems to be no doubt that there were twelve divisions of the house of Clève, each with its respective chief, and that the swan was adopted as the emblem of that house; but the evidence given in regard to the existence of the Order is not convincing. However, we are hardly justified in believing that the author was drawing entirely upon his imagination, since he gives an illustration of the emblem worn by the princes of the house of Clève, taken, as he says, from portraits, but without giving their date. The emblem consists of an enamelled Maltese cross, on which is a

blue escutcheon bearing the figure of a swan, in silver, with a golden chain around its neck.

Le Paige's book is an interesting item for consideration, but one is forced to the conclusion that, until collateral evidence is discovered, its contents are not of any special historical value.

Burke's *Orders of Knighthood* mentions the Prussian Order of the Swan, founded by the Elector Frederick II. in 1449, and revived by the King of Prussia in 1843. This Order was, however, of a religious and charitable character, and the decoration was quite different from those mentioned above. Even granting the existence of an earlier Order, the connection between the two seems to be doubtful.

THE SWAN TOWER AT CLÈVE

CHAPTER IX

PERSONS, PLACES, AND THINGS

THE legend of the Swan-Knight, as has been stated on previous pages, is closely identified with the Netherlands. The Lohengrin version is associated with Antwerp; and the knight arrives by way of the river Scheldt. In the operatic story the entire action appears to take place in Antwerp, but the original poetic form places the combat at Mainz; and this latter city also figures in the early form of the Helyas version in a rather puzzling way, which suggests the possibility that future research may produce evidence about the development of the legend which is not now apparent.

There is a tale which continues the adventures of Lohengrin after his parting from Elsa, and conducts him to the region of Luxembourg. According to this story Lohengrin journeyed to the country of "Lizaborye" (*i.e.*, Luxembourg) and married the Princess Belaye. Here, after a happy married life, Lohengrin was murdered; and his

wife's sudden death, through grief, followed soon. They were both buried there, and the name of the country was changed to Lothringen, *i.e.*, Lorraine, to commemorate the hero's name. It would indeed be pleasant if we could identify the place of Lohengrin's burial, so that all the lovers of that beautiful opera might have the opportunity of making a pilgrimage to the spot; but one cannot help feeling that this story of continued matrimonial experiences serves to diminish the interest in the hero's life. We should much prefer to think of him as retracing the journey he made in pursuance of his knightly duties, until he reaches the mysterious country whence he came, there to resume his work as one of the guardians of the Holy Grail.

The story of Helyas, on the other hand, contains more features of geographical interest; but we must remember that romantic geography—so-called—is a study which should be undertaken with care, lest we attribute too much importance to statements which are actually only traceable to the author's imagination. The earliest known version of the story of Helyas (in which, however, the name of Helyas does not appear) places the opening scene on the borders of Hungary. This may have been due merely to the author's desire

to place the story in a locality which was sufficiently distant to add an element of mystery to the narrative. It may, on the other hand, be an indication to us that the question of the origin of this version includes some feature which we do not yet understand. The necessary evidence to solve the problem is still lacking. The version in which Helyas first appears, as well as all the later versions, gives the name of Lillefort to the city and country in which he lived; and the prose version printed by Wynkyn de Worde adds the phrase, "otherwise named the strong isle" (*i.e., l'isle forte*). This has been quite clearly identified with the city of Lille, now in France, but formerly included in Flanders. The name of the city is given as "Insula" on some of the maps of France in ancient times. Lille has always been a place of strategic importance; and it is believed that the name arose from the castle founded there at the beginning of the 11th century, which rose like an island from the marshes surrounding it. Reiffenberg identifies the kingdom of Lillefort as corresponding in a general way to Flanders.

From Lillefort it was entirely practicable for Helyas to go "from river to river" to the city of Nijmegen (Nijmwegen, Nimeguen, Nimègue), where the Emperor Otton, "the first of that

name," was then residing. This was Otto I. (936–973) who reigned over Almayne or Alemainge (*i.e.*, Allemagne, Germany), including the land of Dardayne—the Ardennes—and neighbouring districts.

The ancient Roman city, Noviomagus, now called Nijmegen, seems to be the centre of the Helyas story. Here, where the Rhine loses its identity by reason of its many branches, the Swan-Knight arrived on his errand of mercy, and afterwards bade farewell to his too inquisitive wife. This charming and spotlessly clean little town contains at present very few landmarks of its ancient history; but, on the edge of a hill overlooking the fertile valley of the Rhine, there still remain a few traces of the old castle dating from the time of Charlemagne. The site commands an extensive view of the Waal, as this branch of the Rhine is called; and if Beatrix was watching from one of the castle's windows, she could easily have seen her deliverer long before he landed from his swan-boat.

In the neighbouring city of Clève the visitor finds tangible evidence of a desire to perpetuate the connection of the legend with the locality. The old castle which dominates the town has long borne the name of the Swan (Schwanenburg); and

THE SWAN-KNIGHT STATUE AT CLÈVE

from it arises a high tower, the Schwanenthurm, bearing on its top the golden figure of a swan. Le Paige says that one of the apartments of the castle was used as an assembly hall for the Knights of the Order of the Swan. In the centre of the city stands a statue of the Swan-Knight, erected in 1882. The knight holds the horn in his right hand; and with his left hand he caresses the swan, which nestles close to his side, gazing affectionately upon him. The statue is locally known as the "Lohengrin Monument," and it is mentioned by that title in Baedeker's guide; but there seems to have been a strange misconception of facts. Underneath the figure of the knight, on the four faces of the pedestal, are figures in bas-relief of Beatrix, Dietrich, Conrad, and Gottfried, each bearing its respective name; so the statue represents Helyas, not Lohengrin, and it commemorates the Clève legend, in which Lohengrin does not appear! The fact that Clève now belongs to Germany will probably account for this curious and unfortunate mistake. It is remarkable that a popular error like this should exist in the identical place where so much interest has been shown in the story of Helyas, and where in fact, according to one form of the legend, the action took place.

The monastery to which Helyas went is called Saint Tiry in the Brussels version, *i.e.*, St. Thierry, according to Reiffenberg. In the latest prose version of this story Helyas and his wife the Countess of Bouillon are buried there. An ancient abbey of this name was situated on the river Marne, not far from Rheims, but the identification of this abbey with the story of Helyas is not clear. The Abbey of St. Trond, mentioned elsewhere in the narrative, is not, on the other hand, open to any doubt. The monastery of that name near Liège was founded at a very early date, and was well known in the Middle Ages.

These miscellaneous notes should not be closed without reference to a curious ivory casket mentioned in *The Romance of the Chevelere Assigne* (see footnote to Chapter IV., this volume). The exterior of the casket is divided into thirty-six panels on which are carved a series of pictures relating to the birth and career of the Swan-Knight in the character of Helyas. This small casket is now owned by Hon. George A. Gibbs of Tyntesfield, Somerset, and it has been in the possession of his family for many years. Nothing is known of its origin. Regarded by itself, the casket would have only a passing interest; but our curiosity is stimulated by the fact that it

appears to be an example of a species of work traceable to the Italian ivory-carvers of about the 14th century or earlier, who seem to have had a special interest in this story. There are now in the British Museum eleven ivory panels, evidently taken from a similar casket, which are classified as of Italian workmanship of the late 14th or early 15th century. Also, Du Sommerard's great work, *Les Arts au Moyen Age*, when referring to the art treasures in the Cluny Museum at Paris, mentions an ivory casket of the 13th century, covered with bas-reliefs illustrating a knightly romance of the previous century. It is classified as of Venetian work. A representation of the casket is given among the plates which accompany the text, and it is there indicated as illustrating the romance of *Le Chevalier au Cygne*. The pictures delineated in all these ivory carvings give in detail the incidents of the story of the children changed into swans; so the question may be asked whether these pictures may not have been inspired by that legend rather than by the Swan-Knight legend. In any case, however, these two legends seem to have been amalgamated at an early date, and the curious ivory panels actually illustrate both legends.

CHAPTER X

OTHER KNIGHTS OF THE SWAN

THE existence of a legend so widely spread and presenting a theme of so great interest as that of the Swan-Knight, would naturally lead to treatment of the subject by many different writers. It might also be supposed that there would be many different personalities attributed to the hero of the legend, but it is interesting to note how largely this identification with a named person is confined to the characters we have considered, viz.: Lohengrin and Helyas.

Some writers have treated of a character called *Salvius* (or *Silvius*) *Brabon* (or *Brabo*), who, as his name indicates, is identified with Brabant. The tale is placed in the time of Julius Cæsar, and the locality is Clève, where Cæsar was then residing. The chevalier Salvius, seeing a little boat on the river, boarded it, and was led by a swan to the Castle of Mégue where Queen Germaine dwelt, a widow, with her children. She was the sister of Julius Cæsar, but they had been estranged.

Salvius returned to Clève, and effected a reconciliation between the brother and sister; and, according to one account, he obtained the hand of Germaine's daughter in marriage, and was made the first Duke of Brabant.

This shows, of course, only a bare connection with the original legend, which has become distorted almost beyond recognition. The chevalier Salvius appears also in another tale in which he fights a giant who has terrorised the region about Antwerp. In this tale the swan does not appear, and there is no connection with the legend we are considering. It follows therefore that Salvius may be dismissed without further consideration.

Another story states that Charlemagne was at a castle on the borders of the Rhine, and noticed a swan leading a little boat in which was an armed knight who bore the name *Gerhard Swan*. The knight placed himself at the service of Charlemagne on condition of receiving a gift of lands and a wife. Gerhard rendered good service, and received in marriage Charlemagne's sister Adalis, and was made Duke of the Ardennes. This is a Danish legend, and the Danish name of the sister is Élisa, which appears to correspond with the Elsa of the Lohengrin story. This form of the legend is comprised in the so-called *Karlamagnus Saga*, an

old Norse literary work of which there are manuscripts dating from about the 13th century. It treats principally of tales relating to Charlemagne; but certain passages appear to have been interpolated for the purpose of connecting these tales with the legend of the Swan-Knight. This was probably the source whence the story made its way to Iceland, where it appears in a form in which the hero is the son of Julius Cæsar and bears the name Hélis.[1]

In a previous chapter we have mentioned the character of *Erlin von Schwanenbourg;* and we should also note the fact that in the Latin prose manuscript in the Bodleian Library at Oxford the knight is called *Eneas*, while in the *Romance of the Chevelere Assigne* his name is *Enyas*. These however do not indicate the existence of other personalities, since the variations are probably due to the irregularities naturally incident to oral transmission.

The house of Arkel, in Holland, has a tradition that a swan brought from France John II., lord of Arkel, who lived about the year 700.

In contradistinction to these various legendary

[1] *Cf. Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes*, vol. xxv., 1863–4, article by M. Gaston Paris; also Reiffenberg's *Monuments pour servir*, etc., vol. iv., Introduction.

heroes it is interesting to note the evidence—such as it is—that there was a *historic* Knight of the Swan, to whom, it has been claimed, the title first belonged. Baldwin, the brother of Godfrey of Bouillon, married Godehild, the widowed daughter of Radulf (or Ralph), lord of Toëni and Conches in Normandy, whose father Roger de Toëni was known as the Swan-Knight. This Roger, who died about the year 1040, was a man of prowess, and in the course of his knightly adventures he went to Spain, freed the widowed Ermenside, Countess of Barcelona, from her enemies, married her daughter, and afterwards returned to his home in Normandy. For these exploits he has also been called Roger the Spaniard. In 1035 he founded the Abbey of Chatillon near the town of Conches, which is situated not far from Evreux. Roger's son Radulf, mentioned above, lived first at Conches, but after the Norman Conquest he made his home at Flamstead, Hertfordshire, England, and became the founder of the house of Stafford.

It is said that Roger's emblem was a swan, and that he desired to be called the Swan-Knight, thus concealing his real name and title; and there are known to exist in the literature of the 13th and 14th centuries a couple of references to members

of the family of Toëni as descendants of the Swan-Knight.

On the other hand it is worthy of note that Ordericus Vitalis, the Norman historian, who was born towards the end of the 11th century, and therefore wrote about a century after the time of Roger, apparently knows nothing about Roger's favourite title, as he does not mention it.

Prof. Blöte, in an article entitled "Der historische Schwanritter" published in *Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie*, vol. xxi. (1897), maintains the validity of the claims made in Roger's behalf. He states that Baldwin was known to the Christians by a special banner or sign; and he believes that this may probably have been the sign used by the Toëni family, especially as Baldwin's wife, the granddaughter of Roger, started for the crusades with her husband. Godehild died before the capture of Jerusalem, and in consequence of this fact there may have been (designedly or otherwise) a transfer of the lineal connection with a Swan-Knight from the grandfather of the wife to the grandfather of the husband.[1] If this were

[1] An article by Hyde Clark in *The Saga Book of the Viking Club*, Jan., 1895, refers to Godhilda de Toni as "a Norman Queen of Jerusalem," but gives no authority for this title.

the case it might explain the origin of the popular belief about Godfrey which became a part of the glorification of the latter's memory. According to this theory, therefore, there was a historic Swan-Knight; and the story of his deeds was first connected with Godfrey's younger brother Baldwin, being modified so as to refer to Baldwin's own grandfather. Later, when the memory of Godfrey was undergoing a sort of glorification, and the minds of the people were ready to accept any wonderful story about him, the descent from the Swan-Knight became transferred to Godfrey, and in process of time the tale was changed into the legendary form which we have considered in the previous chapters.[1]

It is an interesting theory, and worthy of close attention and further research. There is enough evidence to whet our curiosity, but scarcely sufficient to convince us that the exact solution of the problem has been found. It seems possible, on the other hand, that the legendary tale of Godfrey's descent arose independently of the history of Roger de Toëni, and that the analogies between the two stories were discovered by later

[1] In *Romania*, vol. xxvi. (1897), M. Gaston ¡Paris reviews Prof. Blöte's article and states his opinion that the chain of evidence in favour of a historic Swan-Knight is very fragile.

writers and made the basis of the theory detailed above. It may well be wished that the evidence were less fragmentary and more conclusive one way or the other.

CHAPTER XI

REVIEW AND CONCLUSIONS

THERE are, therefore, only two named persons of real importance in literature who are known as the Swan-Knight, Lohengrin and Helyas; and it is an interesting fact that, so far as we can judge from the evidence at hand, they seem to have made their appearance very close to the same period.

Lohengrin comes into the literary horizon in connection with one of the great works of German literature; and by reason of his association with that wonderful poem, our attention is attracted and our admiration is kindled. Moreover, the date of the poem can be fixed within close limits.

Helyas, on the other hand, seems to creep into view quietly and even mysteriously, and under circumstances which make very difficult the task of assigning an exact date. His creator is unknown, and the story of his adventures would not of itself command special attention were it not

for the connection established with the life of Godfrey of Bouillon, his reputed grandson. In fact, as one writer has said, Helyas owes his life entirely to his illustrious descendant.

We have noted in Chapter III. the considerations which seem to indicate that the Swan-Knight story in Wolfram's *Parzival* was an original contribution by the author of that poem, and that the identification of Lohengrin with the hero of the legend was not taken from any earlier work. It has been claimed that Gerbert's "continuation" of Chrétien's unfinished poem *Perceval le Gallois* shows indications of the use of an earlier form of the Perceval story, which may have been used also by Wolfram, and may have included a reference to the Swan-Knight legend. The discussion on this point is irrelevant to our present subject except in so far as it might reveal traces of a connection between the Grail legend and the Swan-Knight legend existing at an earlier date than is shown by any literary works now known. Gerbert's lines describing the prophetical revelation made to Perceval in regard to his descendants are cited in this connection. These have been mentioned in Chapter III. The passage is given below as found in Potvin's edition of *Perceval*, vol. vi., pp. 209, 210:

La vois dist: Perchevaux, biax frère,
. . . . . .
Et de ta lignèe venra,
Ce saches-tu, une pucele
Qui moult ert avenans et bele;
Mariée ert à riche roi;
Mais, par péchié et par desroi,
San déserte ert en grant péril
D'ardoir ou de metre à eschil;
Mais—I—fix de li naistera
Qui de ce péril l'ostera;
Autre enfant de li naisteront
Qui plusors terres conquerront;
—I—en i aura; c'est la some,
Qui primes aura forme d'ome,
Qui moult sera et gens et biax
Et puis devenra il oisiaus,
Dont moult ert dolans père et mère;
Et saches bien qu'à l'aisné frère
Avenra aventure bèle.
A femme aura une pucele
A cui venra terre sanz faille,
Par une force de bataille;
Et de celui si naistera
Une fille qui avera
—I—fruit qui moult estera grans
Et moult plaisans à toutes gens,
Car trois fil de li naisteront,
Qui Jerusalem conquerront,
Le sépulcre et la vraie crois.

The *Perceval* manuscript which bears number 12576 in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris is regarded as a valuable manuscript of the poem

and as one which gives the Gerbert text accurately. In this manuscript the lines of the passage we are considering correspond to those quoted above from the Potvin edition; and in the entire section contributed by Gerbert there is no mention of the Swan-Knight.

In the lines quoted above the prophecy made to Perceval informed him that among his descendants would be three brothers who would conquer Jerusalem; and the details of the prophecy leading up to this climax are virtually an abstract of the early history of Helyas!

If Gerbert had before him a poem which connected the Grail legend (through Perceval) with the family of Bouillon (and inferentially the Swan-Knight), it is remarkable that there is no evidence of the connection of these two subjects in the works of any other author of that period. If on the other hand we consider facts instead of hypotheses, we find that the Swan-Knight legend had been connected with the history of the family of Bouillon at least forty or fifty years previously in the romance of *Le Chevalier au Cygne*, and that the narrative therein given corresponds with the lines quoted above. The reasonable and natural conclusion is that unless Gerbert developed the story of Perceval himself, using, by a remark-

able coincidence, the same ideas which another author had already used, he must have borrowed these ideas from the already existing French poem.

Our consideration of the relative chronological positions of Lohengrin and Helyas has carried us within the scope of the Grail legends—a subject so intricate and far-reaching that the investigator may well proceed cautiously, and avoid dogmatic conclusions; but the theory that the story of the Swan-Knight was attached to the history of the family of Bouillon at an *earlier* date than that of its connection with the Grail legends, is supported by authority of the highest order. M. Gaston Paris, for example, has written: "Dans le Chevalier au Cygne nous avons une vieille légende mythologique rattachée aux origines de la maison de Bouillon; cette légende a *plus tard* été reliée a des récits relatifs au Saint Graal" (*La Littérature Française au Moyen Age*, section 29). We may also cite M. Pigeonneau, who, alluding to Wolfram's brief reference in *Parzival*, expresses a similar opinion in these words: "En tout cas, il est impossible de méconnaître, sous cette forme légerement modifiée, la légende qui, *plus de vingt ans avant l'apparition du Parcival*, avait déja inspiré les trouveres de la France Wallonne" (*Le Cycle de la Croisade*, p. 239).

Lohengrin's prestige, arising from his original environment and subsequent dramatic associations, makes him the better known and more interesting character; but it seems, to say the least, very probable that Helyas was the earlier one of the two great Knights of the Swan.

Notes

Notes

The following notes are added to illustrate various points mentioned in the preceding chapters.

Note A (Chapter III.).—It is interesting to observe that Fauriel, when giving an abstract of *Parzival* in his *Histoire de la Poésie Provençale*, closes his review at the point where Parzival takes up his residence at Montsauvage with Conduiramur and Lohengrin. He apparently considers this the end of the tale and does not even allude to the passage about the Swan-Knight.

Note B (Chapter III.).—In Wolfram's *Parzival*, previous to the reference to Lohengrin, there are two passages which require brief notice. One of these (Book IX.) occurs in the conversation between Parzival and the hermit in regard to the Grail castle. The hermit tells Parzival that the Grail Knights send rulers to nations which ask God to supply their lack. The other passage (Book XVI.) states that when Feirefis, Parzival's half-brother, was baptised, a writing suddenly appeared on the Grail to the effect that when a Knight should be sent to rule some earthly nation, he must forbid all questions of his name or origin. If these passages are from the hand of an earlier author, they might be taken as linking the story of Lohengrin with a previously existing work; but they are both so incongruous with the context and so evidently forced into the story for some special purpose,

that we can only regard them as manifestly part of the material added by Wolfram for the purpose of leading up to his tale about Lohengrin.

Note C (Chapter XI.).—Gerbert's reference to the prophecy about Perceval's descendants is in that part of his book which he calls true history ("vraie estoire") in contradistinction to the part which follows; and the conclusion has been drawn that this indicates the use of existing material, as mentioned in this chapter. It is always difficult to decide how much importance is to be attributed to statements of this kind in mediæval literature, and we must in any event remember that Gerbert was writing a romance, not a history. Even granting that this expression may point to a previous work on the subject which may have been a common source for both Gerbert and Wolfram, nevertheless the idea that such a work included a connection between Perceval and the Swan-Knight should be supported by something more than inferences in order to receive serious consideration.

Note D (Chapter XI.).—It has been suggested that Gerbert intended the climax of the prophecy to be the recovery of Jerusalem by a descendant of the future Grail-King; that the personality of Godfrey of Bouillon was the essential point; and that the connection of Godfrey with the Swan-Knight was only an incidental feature of this reference. See an article by Prof. J. F. D. Blöte entitled "Das Aufkommen des Clevischen Schwanritters," in *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, vol. xlii. (1898).

Note E (Chapter XI.).—Potvin evidently takes the view mentioned in this chapter in regard to Gerbert. In *Perceval le Gallois*, vol. v., Appendix, p. 161, he says: "Gerbert semble ne l'avoir écrite que pour rattacher la légende du Graal à la légende du Chevalier au Cygne, et le Cycle de la Table Ronde au Cycle des Croisades."

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